

Preterite vs. Imperfect

Name: _____ Date: _____

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will correctly choose between preterite and imperfect tense based on context.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- 10 index cards
- pen or pencil
- 2 sheets of paper labeled 'Preterite' and 'Imperfect'

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY

1. Label two sheets of paper 'Preterite' (one specific completed action) and 'Imperfect' (repeated/background/ongoing action) and lay them side by side.
2. Write 10 short English sentences on separate index cards, mixing both types (e.g., 'I used to walk to school,' 'I broke my arm last year,' 'She was always singing,' 'We ate dinner at 7pm').
3. Sort each card onto the correct paper (Preterite or Imperfect) based on whether it describes a single completed action or a repeated/ongoing one.
4. Choose your 3 favorite sorted sentences and translate them fully into Spanish using the correct tense for each.

QUESTIONS

1. Sort these two example sentences: 'I ate breakfast at 8am' and 'I used to eat breakfast every day.' Which is preterite and which is imperfect?

2. Write one of your 3 translated sentences in Spanish, and identify whether you used preterite or imperfect.

3. How can you tell from an English sentence whether it should be translated using preterite or imperfect?

4. Give one more original example sentence in English that would use the imperfect tense in Spanish, and explain why.
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