

The Preterit Tense

The Preterit Tense is a past tense. The focus of the Preterit Tense is talking about one certain action that happened at one specific time in the past. Spanish has two Past Tenses, the Preterit and the Imperfect. We will focus only on the Preterit Tense today.

There are AR, ER, and IR Verbs. For the AR Verbs, here are the endings:

Regular Preterit AR Verbs

Yo = é	Nosotros Nosotras = amos
Tú = aste	Vosotros Vosotras = asteis
Èl Ella Usted = ó (it)	Ellos Ellas Ustedes = aron

Example: Hablar

Yo = hablé	Nosotros Nosotras = hablamos
Tú = hablaste	Vosotros Vosotras = hablasteis
Èl Ella Usted = habló (it)	Ellos Ellas Ustedes = hablaron

Regular Preterit ER and IR Verbs

Yo = í	Nosotros Nosotras = imos
Tú = iste	Vosotros Vosotras = isteis
Èl Ella Usted = ió (it)	Ellos Ellas Ustedes = ieron

Example Comer:

Yo = comí	Nosotros Nosotras = comimos
Tú = comiste	Vosotros Vosotras = comisteis
Èl Ella Usted = comió (it)	Ellos Ellas Ustedes = comieron

Example Vivir:

Yo = viví	Nosotros Nosotras = vivimos
Tú = viviste	Vosotros Vosotras = vivisteis
Èl Ella Usted = vivió (it)	Ellos Ellas Ustedes = vivieron

Act. 1: Conjugate the following Verbs in the Regular Preterite!

1 yo ayudar	17 vosotros escuchar
2 yo aprender	18 vosotras correr
3 yo abrir	19 vosotros recibir
4 yo buscar	20 vosotras esperar
5 tú caminar	21 ellos estudiar
6 tú beber	22 ellas deber
7 tú asistir	23 Ustedes subir
8 tú cantar	24 Juan y María explicar
9 él comprar	25 yo gritar
10 ella comer	26 tú prometer
11 Usted decidir	27 él sufrir
12 (it) desear	28 nosotros invitar
13 nosotros enseñar	29 ellos vender
14 nosotras comprender	30 yo llevar
15 tú y yo escribir	31 tú responder
16 Susana y yo entrar	32 ella vivir

There are quite a few Irregular Preterit Verbs. Let's look at several of these!

Andar (to walk)= anduve, anduviste, anduvo, anduvimos, anduvieron

Caber (to fit) = cupe, cupiste, cupo, cupimos, cupieron

Decir (to say, tell) = dije, dijiste, dijo, dijimos, dijeron

Estar (to be, was, were) = estuve, estuviste, estuvo, estuvimos, estuvieron

Hacer (to do, make) = hice, hiciste, hizo, hicimos, hicieron

Poder (ue) (could, was able)= pude, pudiste, pudo, pudimos, pudieron

Poner (to put, place) puse, pusiste, puso, pusimos, pusieron

Producir (to produce) produje, produjiste, produjo, produjimos, produjeron

Querer (to want) = quise, quisiste, quiso quisimos, quisieron

Saber (found out)= supe supiste, supo, supimos, supieron

Tener (to have) = tuve, tuviste, tuvo, tuvimos, tuvieron

Traer (to bring) = traje, trajiste, trajo, trajimos, trajeron

Venir (to come) = vine, viniste, vino, vinimos, vinieron

Dar (to give) = di, diste, dio dimos, dieron

Ir (to go, went) fui, fuiste, fue, fuimos, fueron

Ser (was, were) fui, fuiste, fue, fuimos, fueron

- Any time an ER or IR would have 3 vowels in a row, we must change the middle vowel “i” to a “y”:

Caer (to fall)= caí, caíste, cayó, caímos, cayeron

Creer (to believe) = creí, creíste, creyó, creímos, creyeron

Leer (to read) = leí, leíste, leyó, leímos, leyeron

Let's practice the following Irregular Preterit Verbs!

1 yo estar	16 yo traer
2 tú venir (ie)	17 tú caer
3 él poner	18 él oír
4 nosotros traducir	19 nosotras saber
5 ellos obtener	20 ellas dar
6 yo producir	21 yo hacer
7 tú traer	22 tú traer
8 ella hacer	23 él leer
9 nosotras decir	24 nosotras ser
10 ellas poder (ue)	25 Ustedes decir
11 yo querer	26 yo ir
12 tú andar	27 tú creer
13 Usted leer	28 (it) andar
14 nosotros ir	29 nosotros tener
15 ellos tener	30 ellos poner

Preterit Spelling changes because of pronunciation! There are 3 cases where the yo form in the Preterit tense would affect normal pronunciation so that a spelling change is needed to keep the correct pronunciation. This would happen with verbs that end in “car”, “gar” and “zar”.

We have learned that if the letter “c” is in front of an “a, o, or u” then the “c” will make the “k” sound. This causes a problem in the Preterit AR verbs with the “yo” form.

Examples: yo tocar normally would be yo tocé but then the c would have to change sounds. In this case, with all verbs that end in “car” would change to “qué” to keep the pronunciation correct.

We have learned that the letter “g” make the “g” sound in front of (a, o, and u) but makes the “h” sound in front of (e, and i)

Examples: yo llegar normally would be yo llegé but then the g would have to change sounds. In this case, with all verbs that end in “gar” would change to “gué” to keep the pronunciation correct.

We have learned that the letter “z” make the “s” sound in front of (a, o, and u) but it is not allowed in Spanish to be in front of (e, and i).

Example: yo cruzar normally would be yo crucé but a “z” is not allowed in front of an (e or i). In this case the “z” will change to a “c” . Yo crucé!

Act. 3: Conjugate the following “car”, “gar” and “zar” verbs to the correct Preterit conjugations!

1 yo llegar	16 yo masticar
2 tú pagar	17 to tocar
3 yo jugar	18 Ustedes sacar
4 él castigar	19 yo empacar
5 yo apagar	20 tú explicar
6 nosotros entregar	21yo cruzar
7 yo pegar	22 él empezar
8 ellos obligar	23 yo comenzar
9 yo colgar	24 nosotros lanzar
10 yo pagar	25 yo almorzar
11 tú tocar	26 ellos realizar

12 yo sacar	27 yo rechazar
13 ella empacar	28 tú alcanzar
14 yo explicar	29 yo empezar
15 nosotras buscar	30 yo lanzar