

The Preterit (el pretérito) and Imperfect (el imperfect) past tenses in Spanish. - Determining when to use which tense.

Read each explanation below and select whether they signal the use of the ***el pretérito*** or ***el imperfecto***.

1. Talking about specific actions that were completed in the past.
2. Talking about the beginning or the end of an action.
3. Describing an ongoing action in the past with no reference to its start or end.
4. To narrate and/or sequence a series of past actions.
5. To talk about habitual events and actions that happened in the past.
6. To 'set the scene.'
7. To talk about actions that were in progress.
8. To state an action that interrupts another action already in progress in the past.
9. To talk about physical or personality characteristics.
10. To talk about physical or emotional states of being.
11. You can determine precisely when the past action occurred.
12. You can determine how many times a past action occurred.
13. To talk about the time and/or the weather.
14. To talk about someone's age in the past tense.
15. Weather that is considered a completed event.
16. Discussing two or more actions that happened simultaneously.

There are certain vocabulary words and expressions that can help you determine which tense you need. Here are a few of them. Read over the list below and select if the word/phrase signals the use of the ***pretérito*** or ***el imperfecto***.

1. Ayer
2. Hace dos días
3. Cada lunes
4. Todos los días
5. Cada año
6. Anteayer

7. Frecuentemente
8. Siempre / Nunca
9. Por un rato
10. En ese momento
11. De repente
12. Ya
13. De niño(a)
14. La semana pasada
15. A menudo