

## PRETERIT AND IMPERFECT IN A PARAGRAPH

Background information, conditions – *imperfect*

Main events / story line – *preterit*

Example – *Shrek*

Conditions / Background  
IMPERFECT

- Shrek was an ogre.
- He lived in a swamp.
- He didn't want company.
- He had a kind heart.
- The woods had many thieves.

THESE ARE CONDITIONS,  
NOT ACTIONS. THEY  
ENCHANCE THE STORY  
BUT DO NOT TELL IT.

Story line  
PRETERIT

- He saved a donkey.
- He fought a dragon.
- He saved a princess.
- He fell in love with her.
- He took her to the king

THESE ARE WHAT  
HAPPENED IN THE  
STORY. YOU CAN  
SAY FIRST, SECOND,  
THIRD, ETC.

\*\*\*All other rules that we have learned for preterit and imperfect still apply. Look for key phrases and sentences with more than one verb. If the time is told in the story, use imperfect. If there is a description, use imperfect.

For each underlined verb, decide whether you would use *preterit* or *imperfect* in Spanish. If the verb expresses an action which is part of the story line, mark a **P** in the space provided. If the verb expresses a condition that was already in existence or a description, mark **I**.

Many years ago, we were living (I) in Santiago. It was (I) a beautiful little town. Not far from it stood (I) a huge tract of land covered with pines. In the midst of these towering pines was (I) one of the bluest lakes imaginable. Every weekend people would come (I) from distant towns to enjoy the out-of doors with a hike through the woods.

One Sunday our family decided (P) to spend the day hiking there. And when father suggested (P) a visit to another park, we all shouted (P) our preference for the pine forest. After all, it was (I) close to home had (I) sufficient recreational facilities and possessed (I) the most magnificent scenery.

When we left (P) the house, it was (I) about 1:00. The day was (I) an ideal one. There was (I) lots of sunshine and huge clouds dotted (I) the sky. The temperature was approaching (I) 75 degrees.

As we turned (I) onto the highway, a gigantic semi-truck roared (P) past us. While we were heading (I) to our destination, we spotted (P) several deer in the distance. They were licking a salt block. Within 10 minutes we arrived (P) at the park entrance. The ranger greeted (P) us and we inquired (P) about guided tours. We paid (P) the fee and began (P) our winding drive to the parking area. On arrival we parked (P) the car locked (P) it. While we changed (I) into hour hiking boots, a large animal darted (P) in front of us. It was (I) a moose.

For almost 5 hours we tramped (P) through the magnificent pines. How softly the wind blew (I) through the boughs. The air was (I) filled with their delightful fragrance. Meanwhile, the birds were chirping (I) noisily. We found (P) an especially nice spot and sat down (P). We removed (P) our snacks from our packs and ate (P) them. As we were resting (I) against the remains of a fallen tree, small creatures appeared (P) before us and seemed (I) bewildered by our presence.

The sun was setting (I) when we turned (P) back to the car. When we reached (P) the parking area, we stopped (P) for a drink of water. We checked out (P) at the gate and were (P) home once more after a short time.

Now, change the verbs in this paragraph to the preterit or the imperfect tenses.

Voy (1) al cine con Roberto. Salimos (2) de la casa a las dos y media y llegamos (3) al cine a las tres. Mucha gente espera (4) delante del cine. Algunos estudianten hablan (5) con sus amigos y algunos niños juegan (6). Esperamos (7) diez minutos y finalmente Roberto compra (8) dos boletos y entramos (9) en el cine. Hace (10) mucho calor en el cine y me quito (11) el sombrero y el abrigo. Delante de nosotros un hombre explica (12) la película a su mujer mientras un niño come (13) una manzana. Otro niño duerme (14). La película es (15) muy interesante. Termina (16) a las cinco y salimos (17) para la casa. Yo tengo (18) hambre y Roberto está (19) cansado. Volvemos (20) a casa para comer la cena y descansar.

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|--------------|---------------|
| 1. Fui       | 11. me quité  |
| 2. Salimos   | 12. explicaba |
| 3. llegamos  | 13. comía     |
| 4. esperaba  | 14. dormía    |
| 5. hablaban  | 15. era       |
| 6. jugaban   | 16. Terminó   |
| 7. Esperamos | 17. salimos   |
| 8. compró    | 18. tenía     |
| 9. entramos  | 19. estaba    |
| 10. Hacía    | 20. Volvimos  |