

### Preterite of **-car**, **-gar**, and **-zar** verbs

In the preterite, verbs that end in **-car**, **-gar**, and **-zar** are spelled differently in the **yo** form to maintain the pronunciation.

buscar	<b>c</b>	becomes	<b>qu</b>	(yo) bus <b>qué</b>
pagar	<b>g</b>	becomes	<b>gu</b>	(yo) pag <b>ué</b>
empezar	<b>z</b>	becomes	<b>c</b>	(yo) empec <b>é</b>

### More Verbs with Irregular Preterite Stems

The verbs **venir**, **querer**, **decir**, and **traer** have irregular **preterite stems**.

Verb	Stem	Irregular Preterite Endings
venir querer	<b>vin-</b> <b>quis-</b>	<b>-imos</b> <b>-isteis</b> <b>-ieron</b>
Verb	Stem	ustedes/ ellos/ ellas
decir traer	<b>dij-</b> <b>traj-</b>	<b>dijeron</b> <b>trajeron</b>

**Nota gramatical:** Verbs such as **leer** and **construir** change the **i** to **y** in the él/ella/usted and ellos/ellas/ustedes forms of the preterite.

<b>leer:</b>	leí	leímos	<b>construir:</b>	construí	construimos
	leíste	leísteis		construiste	construisteis
	leyó	leyeron		construyó	construyeron

### The Imperfect Tense

The **imperfect** is used to describe something that was not perfected or not completed in the past. Regular verbs in the **imperfect** take these endings:

estar	hacer	salir
estaba	hacía	salía
estabas	hacías	salías
estaba	hacía	salía
estábamos	hacíamos	salíamos
estabais	hacíais	salíais
estaban	hacían	salían

### Preterite and Imperfect

Use the **preterite** if the action started and ended at a definite time.

La guerra **empezó** en 1846.  
*The war began in 1846.*

Use the **imperfect** to talk about past actions without saying when they began or ended.

Los guerreros no **tenían** miedo del enemigo.  
*The warriors were not afraid of the enemy.*

You can apply both tenses to talk about two overlapping events.  
Cuando la guerra **terminó**, Santa Ana **era** presidente de México.  
*When the war ended, Santa Ana was president of Mexico.*

**Nota gramatical:** To form most **past participles**, drop the infinitive ending and add **-ado** for **-ar** verbs or **-ido** for **-er** and **-ir** verbs.

**cerrar** La oficina está **cerrada**. *The office is closed.*

**perder** Estramos **perdidos**. *We're lost.*

**vestir** Carmen está bien **vestida** hoy. *Carmen is well dressed today.*

If the verb is reflexive, drop the **se** from the infinitive

peinarse → **peinado**