

El Imperfecto

Another way to talk about the past is with the imperfect tense. Use the imperfect tense to talk about actions that happened repeatedly in the past or actions that occurred over a long period of time. The imperfect may also set the stage for other actions that occur in the past.

The imperfect endings for –AR verbs are:

-aba	-ábamos
-abas	-abáis
-aba	-aban

The preterite endings for –ER & -IR Verbs are:

-ía	-íamos
-ías	-íais
-ía	-ían

There are only three irregular verbs in the imperfect tense:

ir- to go

iba	íbamos
ibas	ibais
iba	iban

ser- to be

era	éramos
eras	erais
era	eran

ver – to see

veía	veíamos
veías	veíais
veía	veían

- As you know, in Spanish you can often omit the subject of the verb because the subject is made clear by the verb ending.

Vivo en Chicago. (The subject “yo” is included in the verb ending “-o”.)

However, since the **yo** and the **Ud./él/ella** forms are the same in the imperfect for **-ar**, **-er** and **-ir** verbs, speakers often use the subject pronouns to avoid confusion.

Patricia tenía un triciclo rojo pero yo tenía uno azul.

Patricia used to have a red trike but I had a blue one.

- Expressions such as **generalmente**, **usualmente**, **por lo general**, **a menudo**, **muchas veces**, **de vez en cuando**, **todos los días**, **nunca** and **de niño** can cue you to use the imperfect because they imply that something happened repeatedly in the past.