



The Imperfect Tense

1. The imperfect tense is a past tense. It is known as the narrative past. It is used to describe what “was going on” or what “used to” happen on a repeated basis in the past.
2. The imperfect tense is also used to describe mental, physical, or emotional states in the past. It is used to tell time and to talk about the weather in the past. It is also used to talk about one’s age in the past.
3. Regular verbs in the imperfect tense are conjugated as follows: drop the “-ar,” “-er,” or “-ir” of the infinitive and add the following endings.

-AR Verbs

-aba	-ábamos
-abas	-----
-aba	-aban

-ER and -IR verbs

-ía	-íamos
-ías	-----
-ía	-ían

4. Below are some examples of verbs conjugated in the imperfect tense. Practice conjugating the verbs next to each example.

Hablar - to speak

hablaba	hablábamos
hablabas	-----
hablaba	hablaban

Cantar - to sing

_____	_____
_____	-----
_____	_____

Comer - to eat

comía	comíamos
comías	-----
comía	comían

Leer - to read

_____	_____
_____	-----
_____	_____

Vivir - to live

vivía	vivíamos
vivías	-----
vivía	vivían

Subir- to climb

_____	_____
_____	-----
_____	_____

5. Below are some words often seen with the imperfect tense.

a veces	at times or sometimes
de vez en cuando	once in awhile
muchas veces	many times
con frecuencia, frecuentemente	frequently
cada lunes/ todos los lunes	every Monday
cada verano	every summer
cada invierno	every winter
cada día/todos los días	every day

Examples.

We used to watch the television everyday.

Nosotros mirábamos la televisión cada día.

I used to eat at that restaurant every Sunday.

Yo comía en aquel restaurante cada domingo.

Practice

a) Miguel used to ski in Argentina every winter.

b) The girls used to climb the mountains once in a while.

6. The following three verbs are irregular in the imperfect tense. These verbs must be memorized.

Ser - to be

era	éramos
eras	-----
era	eran

Ir - to go

iba	íbamos
ibas	-----
iba	iban

Ver - to see

veía	veíamos
veías	-----
veía	veían

Examples.

I used to go to the market every Monday.

Yo iba al mercado cada lunes.

Practice

a) She used to be a doctor.

b) We used to see Miguel everyday.

c) We used to go to the church every Sunday.

d) The boy was short. His brother was tall.

Answer Key

4.

Cantar - to sing

cantaba	cantábamos
cantabas	-----
cantaba	cantaban

Leer- to read

leía	leíamos
leías	
leía	leían

Subir- to climb, to go up

subía	subíamos
subías	-----
subía	subían

5.

- a) Miguel esquiaba en Argentina en el invierno.
- b) Las muchachas subían las montañas de vez en cuando.

6.

- a) Ella era doctora.
- b) Nosotros veíamos a Miguel cada día.
- c) Nosotros íbamos a la iglesia cada domingo.
- d) El muchacho era bajo. Su hermano era alto.