

Verb Lesson 5—IMPERFECT TENSE

REGULAR VERBS

tomar:	tom	-aba, -abas, -aba, -ábamos, -abais, -aban
leer:	le	-ía, -ías, -ía, -íamos, -íais, -ían
subir:	sub	

VERBS IRREGULAR IN THE IMPERFECT TENSE

ir:	iba, íbas, iba, íbamos, ibais, iban
ser:	era, eras, era, éramos, erais, eran
ver:	veía, veías, veía, veíamos, veíais, veían

USES OF THE IMPERFECT TENSE

The imperfect tense is used to indicate the continuance of a past action or event, or to describe a situation in past time. Neither the beginning nor the end of the event or situation is indicated. Thus, it is used:

1. To express what was happening, used to happen, or happened repeatedly in the past.

Los pájaros *cantaban*.

The birds were singing.

Vivíamos en esta calle.

We used to live on this street.

Tomás a menudo *llegaba* tarde.
(happened repeatedly)

Thomas often would arrive (arrived) late.

2. To describe persons or things in the past.

Pedro *era* rubio y *tenía* los ojos azules.

Peter was blond and had blue eyes.

La sala *estaba* llena de gente.

The living room was full of people.

3. To describe a state of mind in the past, with such verbs as *creer*, *pensar*, *querer*, and *saber*.

Creían (*Pensaban*, *Sabían*) que era importante.

They believed (thought, knew) that it was important.

Queríamos comprar un coche nuevo.

We wanted to buy a new car.

4. To express the time of day in the past.

Eran las ocho.

It was eight o'clock.

5. In the construction *hacía* + an expression of time + *que* + the imperfect tense, to describe an action or event that began in the past and continued in the past. In questions, *How long?* is translated by *¿Cuánto tiempo hacía que . . . ?* + the imperfect tense.

Hacía un mes que viajaban.
It a month that they were
made traveling

They had been traveling for a month.

¿Cuánto tiempo hacía que dormían?
How time did it that they were
much make sleeping

How long had they been sleeping?

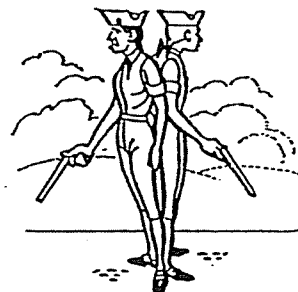
EXERCISES

A. Write each verb in the imperfect tense for the subject indicated.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Juan</p> <p>----- (beber)</p> <p>----- (recibir)</p> <p>----- (amar)</p> <p>3. yo</p> <p>----- (venir)</p> <p>----- (trabajar)</p> <p>----- (prometer)</p> <p>5. nosotros</p> <p>----- (salir)</p> <p>----- (llegar)</p> <p>----- (saber)</p> | <p>2. los niños</p> <p>----- (invitar)</p> <p>----- (tener)</p> <p>----- (abrir)</p> <p>4. tú</p> <p>----- (pensar)</p> <p>----- (creer)</p> <p>----- (decir)</p> |
|---|---|

B. Write the correct form of the verb in the imperfect tense.

1. Nosotros ----- buenos amigos. (ser)
2. Nosotros ----- al cine los sábados. (ir)
3. Su hermana ----- muy hermosa. (ser)
4. Yo ----- a su casa con frecuencia. (ir)
5. Los señores González ----- ricos. (ser)
6. Mi amigo y yo los ----- a menudo. (ver)
7. Ellos ----- a vender la casa. (ir)
8. Yo ----- a mi amigo todos los días. (ver)
9. ¿----- Vd. a visitar a Ana? (ir)
10. Algunas veces Pablo la ----- en el mercado. (ver)



C. Complete the English sentences.

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. Los muchachos <u>corrían</u> por el parque. | The boys ----- through the park. |
| 2. Yo <u>vivía</u> en Colorado. | ----- in Colorado. |
| 3. Juan nos <u>visitaba</u> frecuentemente. | John ----- us frequently. |
| 4. <u>Comíamos</u> en aquel restaurante. | ----- in that restaurant. |
| 5. Todas las muchachas <u>cantaban</u> . | All the girls ----- |
| 6. Le <u>admirábamos</u> mucho. | ----- him a great deal. |
| 7. ¿Qué <u>decías</u> a Pedro? | What ----- Peter? |
| 8. Los niños <u>iban</u> a la escuela. | The children ----- to school. |
| 9. La lección <u>era</u> difícil. | The lesson ----- difficult. |
| 10. Le <u>veíamos</u> a menudo. | We ----- him often. |

D. Translate the English words into Spanish.

1. *I was reading* una novela. leer -----
2. *We were* alumnos de la misma escuela. Ser -----
3. ¿Por qué *were you crying*? llorar -----
4. *It was* imposible convencerle. Ser -----
5. *He was going* a comprar un automóvil. Ir -----
6. *We used to come* aquí en el verano. Venir -----
7. *I used to see* a Enrique con frecuencia. Ver -----
8. ¿A dónde *were you (pl.) going*? Ir -----
9. *They were listening* atentamente. Escuchar -----
10. *He used to be* mi profesor de español. Ser -----
11. *They used to see* a Carlos todos los días. Ver -----
12. Vds. *used to live* en Cuba, ¿verdad? Vivir -----
13. ¿*Were you* su amigo? Ser -----
14. *I was not able* estudiar. Poder -----
15. *I was* muy pobre. Ser -----
16. Carlos y María *were dancing*. bailar -----
17. *We were going* a pasar una semana en el campo. Ir -----
18. ¿Quién *used to say* eso? Decir -----
19. *We were working* todo el día. Trabajar -----
20. El profesor *was writing* en la pizarra. Escribir -----

E. Complete the Spanish sentences. Put in the imperfect tense.

1. It was raining when we left.
----- cuando -----
2. I used to buy shoes in that store.
----- zapatos en esa tienda.
3. What were you doing during the day?
¿Qué ----- Vds. durante el día?
4. She used to earn a great deal of money.
----- mucho dinero.
5. We used to receive many letters from him.
----- muchas cartas de él.
6. They were selling fruits and vegetables.
----- frutas y legumbres.
7. Paul used to study much.
Pablo ----- mucho.
8. The birds were singing in the trees.
Los pájaros ----- en los árboles.



9. I was carrying the suitcases.
 ----- las maletas.
10. Anthony and I were looking at the airplanes.
 Antonio y yo ----- los aviones.
11. I always played with my friends in the afternoon.
 Siempre ----- con mis amigos por la tarde.
12. It was one o'clock when they arrived.
 ----- la una cuando -----
13. We often went to the country in the summer.
 A menudo ----- al campo en el verano.
14. He was blond and had blue eyes.
 ----- rubio y ----- los ojos azules.
15. The mother read while the children slept.
 La madre ----- mientras los niños -----
16. We were eating when he called.
 ----- cuando -----
17. When I was young, I believed in ghosts.
 Cuando ----- joven, ----- en los fantasmas.
18. What were you doing while I was downtown?
 ¿Qué ----- Vds. mientras yo ----- en el centro?
19. Who was calling me?
 ¿Quién me ----- ?
20. They were very tired.
 ----- muy cansados.

Montezuma II (1480?-1520) was emperor of the Aztecs when Cortés arrived in Mexico (1519). Because Montezuma was imprisoned by Cortés, the Aztecs rose in revolt. Montezuma pleaded with his people not to attack the palace, but the Aztecs, believing that he had turned traitor, stoned him to death.

