

EL PRETÉRITO

- The preterite is one of the tenses used to describe the **past**. The preterite is used for actions in the past that are seen as completed. Use of the preterite tense means that the past action had a definite beginning and definite end. In English, it can be compared to the -ed ending.
- To conjugate regular verbs in the preterite, simply drop the -ar, find the subject, and add one of the following endings:

PRONOUNS	-AR ENDINGS	-ER ENDINGS	-IR ENDINGS
yo	-é	-í	-í
tú	-aste	-iste	-iste
él, ella, Ud.	-ó	-ió	-ió
nosotros(as)	-amos	-imos	-imos
ellos, ellas, Uds.	-aron	-ieron	-ieron

- In the preterite, there are accents on the first and third person singular forms. Accent marks are very important in Spanish. Note the differences in meaning in of the following sentences:

Hablo español.*I speak Spanish.***Habló español.***He/She/You (formal) spoke Spanish.*

- Here are some examples of the preterite tense.

Ella nadó en la piscina.*She swam in the pool.***Ayer yo patiné sobre el hielo.***Yesterday I ice skated.***Ellos compraron esquís.***They bought skis.***Tú rentaste un barquito.***You rented a small boat.***IRREGULAR YO'S**

- In order to preserve the sound of the infinitive, a number of verbs change their spelling in the preterite tense. The following changes occur in the "yo" form only:

Verbs that end in -car → the yo form changes to **qué**Verbs the end in -gar → the yo form changes to **gué**Verbs that end in -zar → the yo form changes to **cé**

- Here are some examples:

PRONOUNS	TOCAR	JUGAR	EMPEZAR
yo	to<u>qu</u>é	ju<u>gu</u>é	empe<u>ce</u>é
tú	tocaste	jugaste	empezaste
él, ella, usted	tocó	jugó	empezó
nosotros	tocamos	jugamos	empezamos
ellos, ellas, ustedes	tocaron	jugaron	empezaron

