Notes from second lesson on Imperfect Tense:

These verbs lean imperfect by default unless the context forces a single event:

- ser
- estar
- haber
- tener
- querer
- gustar
- pensar
- creer
- sentir(se)
- parecer

Why? Because they describe states, not events.

If it describes what something *was like*, how someone *felt*, or what someone *used to do*, it's probably imperfect.

Narratives Focused on the Imperfect:

Era una tarde tranquila en casa. *It was a calm afternoon at home.*

Mi hermana leía en el sofá mientras yo dibujaba en la mesa. *My sister was reading on the couch while I was drawing at the table.*

La ventana estaba abierta y una brisa suave entraba lentamente. *The window was open and a soft breeze was coming in slowly.*

El perro dormía en el suelo y soñaba, moviendo las patas. *The dog was sleeping on the floor and dreaming, moving his paws.*

Todo parecía normal hasta que escuchamos un ruido fuerte en la cocina. *Everything seemed normal until we heard a loud noise in the kitchen.*

Why Each Imperfect Form Is Used (above)

Era

Used because it describes a background state—what the afternoon was like, not an event.

Leía / dibujaba

Both describe actions in progress happening at the same time. They are not completed events; they form the "video" of the scene.

Estaba

Describes a condition (the window being open). Conditions are ongoing states, not events.

Entraba

An ongoing action—the breeze was coming in continuously, not at a single moment.

Dormía / soñaba

Both describe continuous background actions. The dog wasn't completing a sleep; he was in the middle of it.

Parecía

A mental/visual impression, which is inherently a state, not an event.

Every highlighted verb (above) answers one of these questions:

- Was it in progress? → imperfect

- Was it a description? → imperfect

- Was it a condition? → imperfect

- Was it a repeated or habitual action? → imperfect

- Was it a mental/emotional state? → imperfect

English structures (was reading, used to read, was open, seemed), but Spanish uses one tense to cover them.

Preterite Narrative (photo/snapshot version):

Fue una tarde tranquila en casa. *It was a calm afternoon at home (as a completed block of time).*

Mi hermana leyó en el sofá y yo dibujé en la mesa. *My sister read on the couch and I drew at the table (finished actions).*

La ventana estuvo abierta y una brisa suave entró lentamente. *The window was open for that period, and a soft breeze came in (bounded conditions).*

El perro durmió en el suelo y soñó, moviendo las patas. *The dog slept on the floor and dreamed, moving his paws (completed events).*

Todo pareció normal hasta que escuchamos un ruido fuerte en la cocina. *Everything seemed normal until we heard a loud noise in the kitchen (a single impression).*

What changes when everything becomes preterite?

The scene becomes a sequence of events

Instead of a flowing, ongoing atmosphere, each verb becomes a completed action.

- *leyó* = she finished reading

- *dibujé* = I finished drawing

- *entró* = the breeze entered once

- *durmió* = the dog slept (as a completed block)

Background becomes bounded

- *estuvo abierta* = the window was open for a defined period

- *pareció* = it seemed (once, at that moment)

The "video" becomes a slideshow

The imperfect version feels like a continuous scene unfolding. The preterite version feels like a list of things that happened.

- Same vocabulary

- Same setting

- Same characters

- Different logic

The imperfect creates a *world*. The preterite creates a *timeline*.