

Imperfect: Part III

One way to determine if a verb is actually the imperfect is to try substituting one of the following:

was/were ...ing

used to ...

would (meaning used to) ...

The following examples show how to use this substitution test for the imperfect:

I worked in the agency during the day.

I was working in the agency during the day.

I visited my grandmother every day.

I used to visit my grandmother every day.

Every afternoon **I took** a nap.

Every afternoon **I would take** a nap.

One does not normally think of a general mental state or physical sensations as having a definite beginning or end, and so they are usually expressed in the imperfect.

Ramón tenía miedo de hablar en público.

Ramón was afraid to speak in public.

Yo creía que Juan podía hacerlo.

I thought that Juan could do it.

Me gustaba el coche.

I liked the car. (The car was pleasing to me.)

The imperfect is used to describe how things were or what things were like. Use the imperfect when describing the characteristics of people, things or conditions.

Era un muchacho muy inteligente.

He was a very intelligent boy.

Era una señorita muy guapa.

She was a beautiful young lady.

Las ventanas estaban abiertas.

The windows were open.

La casa era blanca.

The house was white.