

El pretérito

We use the preterite tense to talk about things that happened in the past. Remember that, in general, verb endings tell who did an action and when it was done. Here are all the preterite forms of regular *-ar*, *-er*, and *-ir* verbs:

comprar = to buy (*-ar* endings: *é, aste, ó, amos, asteis, aron*)

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------|
| (Yo) | compré | (Nosotros) | compramos |
| (Tú) | compraste | (Vosotros) | comprasteis |
| (Él/Ella/Ud.) | compró | (Ellos/Ellas/Uds.) | compraron |

comer = to eat (*-er* endings: *í, iste, ió, imos, isteis, ieron*)

| | | | |
|---------------|---------|--------------------|-----------|
| (Yo) | comí | (Nosotros) | comimos |
| (Tú) | comiste | (Vosotros) | comisteis |
| (Él/Ella/Ud.) | comió | (Ellos/Ellas/Uds.) | comieron |

vivir = to live (*-ir* endings: *í, iste, ió, imos, isteis, ieron*)

| | | | |
|---------------|---------|--------------------|-----------|
| (Yo) | viví | (Nosotros) | vivimos |
| (Tú) | viviste | (Vosotros) | vivisteis |
| (Él/Ella/Ud.) | vivió | (Ellos/Ellas/Uds.) | vivieron |

•Remember that *-ar* and *-er* verbs that have a stem change in the present tense do **not** have a stem change in the preterite.

cerrar – to close (*e → ie*):

Cierro las ventanas de mi cuarto todas las noches.

Pero ayer, no cerré las ventanas.

Devolver – to return (*o → ue*):

Siempre devuelvo los libros los miércoles.

Ayer, devolví tres libros.

•Remember that in the preterite, verbs whose infinitive ends in *-gar* or *-car* have a spelling change in the *yo* form. All of their other preterite forms are regular.

pagar → yo pagué

llegar → yo llegué

jugar → yo jugué

sacar → yo saqué

buscar → yo busqué

tocar → yo toqué