Preterite (indefinido) or Imperfect (imperfecto)?
Which form do I use?

Tutorial
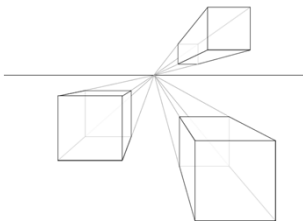
Adela Gánem-Gutiérrez

Lexa Olivera-Smith

Teresa Torres

Using the preterite (indefinido) and the imperfect (imperfecto)

- This tutorial aims to help you understand how our minds make sense of the world and how we use language, more specifically grammar, to communicate our individual *perspectives* on **situations** and **time**.
- So, to understand how language works we need to understand what language allows us to do. We use grammar to describe a **particular view of a situation** (this is what we call **aspect**) and to locate situations in time by means of **tense**.

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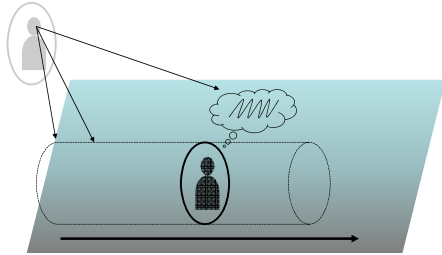
1. It's a question of PERSPECTIVE…
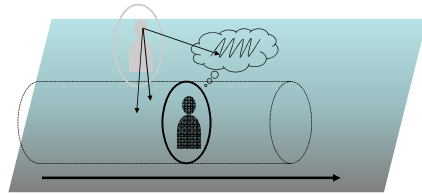

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2. …and

or SCOPE

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The preterite… evokes *distance* or detachment
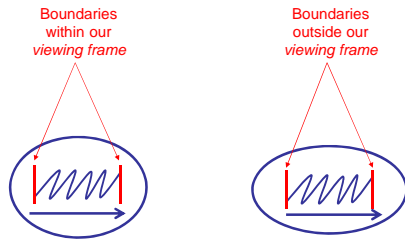

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The imperfect… evokes *closeness*

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Slide 19
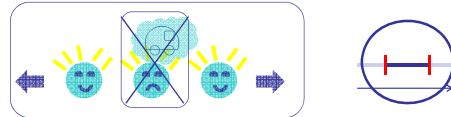
We can also think about this as construing events 〰 (e.g., 'to eat') or states — (e.g., 'to be') from different *viewing frames*

Boundaries within our *viewing frame*

Boundaries outside our *viewing frame*

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preterite

- *Juan era muy inteligente. Sin embargo, **fue** muy tonto al comprar ese coche.*

- Juan was generally intelligent. However, he acted unintelligently when he bought that car.

- We 'zoom in' on the situation and thereby impose boundaries on it.
- We construe the situation as temporary.

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