

**VERBS THAT CHANGE MEANING IN THE PRETERIT**

Some verbs actually change meaning, depending upon whether they are used in the preterite or the imperfect. This is not surprising, since the difference in meaning can be traced back to the different way in which these two past tenses are used.

**conocer**

**Conocí** a Juan hace cinco años.

I **met** Juan five years ago. (completed action)

En aquella época **conocíamos** muy bien la ciudad.

At that time we **knew** the city very well.

(no definite beginning or end)

**querer**

María **quiso** comprar la casa.

María **tried** to buy the house. (completed action)

Juan **quería** comprar la casa.

Juan **wanted** to buy the house.

(no definite beginning or end)

**no querer**

María **no quiso** comprar la casa.

María **refused** to buy the house. (completed action)

Juan **no quería** comprar la casa.

Juan **did not want** to buy the house.

(no definite beginning or end)

**saber**

María lo **supo** ayer.

María **found out** yesterday. (completed action)

Juan **sabía** que María venía.

Juan **knew** that María was coming. (no definite beginning or end)

**poder**

María **pudo** levantar la mesa.

María **succeeded in** lifting the table. (completed action)

Juan **podía** participar en la manifestación.

Juan **was able** to participate in the demonstration.

(no definite beginning or end)

**tener**

María **tuvo** una carta de su mamá.

María **received** a letter from her mom. (completed action)

Juan **tenía** un coche nuevo.

Juan **used to have** a new car. (no definite beginning or end)

VERBS THAT CHANGE MEANING IN PRETERITE TENSE:  
SABER-CONOCER, PODER-NO PODER, QUERER-NO QUERER, TENER

Write the correct past tense (imperfect or preterite) of the verb in parentheses:

1. En la clase, Pablo nunca (saber) \_\_\_\_\_ la respuesta.
2. Yo (saber) \_\_\_\_\_ ayer que Beto había llegado.
3. Nosotros (conocer) \_\_\_\_\_ todos los caminos de España.
4. Lauro (conocer) \_\_\_\_\_ a Bárbara ayer; mi hermano se la presentó a él.
5. Cuando era adolescente, mi papá (poder) \_\_\_\_\_ correr diez millas por día.
6. Ella practicó seis meses, y finalmente (poder) \_\_\_\_\_ alcanzar la nota alta.
7. Cuando yo era bebé, no (poder) \_\_\_\_\_ andar.
8. Intenté patinar tres veces, y por fin (poder) \_\_\_\_\_ mantenerme de pie.
9. Por dos horas ella (querer) \_\_\_\_\_ abrir la ventana porque hacía tanto calor.
10. El (querer) \_\_\_\_\_ abrir la ventana, pero no pudo.
11. Ellos quisieron levantar la piedra, pero no (poder) \_\_\_\_\_.
12. La semana pasada ella (tener) \_\_\_\_\_ una carta de su mamá.
13. Antes nosotros (tener) \_\_\_\_\_ a dos primos en Colombia.
14. Tú (querer) \_\_\_\_\_ estudiar toda la noche cuando eras estudiante.
15. Yo (querer) \_\_\_\_\_ gritar, pero me faltó la voz.

Translate into Spanish:

1. She was not willing to spend every summer at the beach.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. We had (received) a telegram with the good news (item).  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. I met (made the acquaintance of) the López family in Madrid last summer.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. He refused to accept my money. \_\_\_\_\_
5. They (m.) knew that Maruja was a blonde. \_\_\_\_\_
6. He tried to stand up, but he failed. \_\_\_\_\_
7. We had two cats when we were little. \_\_\_\_\_
8. They (f.) knew a man who had fourteen cats. \_\_\_\_\_
9. They (m.) found out (learned) that Maruja was going to arrive on Thursday.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. When finally the teacher (m.) asked me the last question, I could answer (succeeded in answering).  
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