

# Preterite with mental and emotional states

**In English** The **past tense** is used to talk about *the beginning of (or a change in) a mental or emotional state or a reaction to a new situation.*

Mom **was/got/became** angry when she saw that I hadn't done my work.

With a verb like **to know**, it's not always clear whether there has been a *change in mental state*. Substituting **to know** with **to find out** makes this change clearer.

I already **knew** the truth about the locket. (no change)

Suddenly I **knew** the truth about the locket! (change)

That day I **found out** the truth about the locket! (change)

With the verb **to want**, it's often unclear if a mental state is just beginning or has been going on for some time. More information, or context, can clear this up.

I **wanted** to know the truth. That's why I'm a scientist! (no change)

When I heard the story, I **wanted** to know the truth. (change)

The past tense of **to be** can signal a change of mental state, or no change at all.

I **was** mad at him. In fact, I **was** mad at him for a week! (no change)

**A** Circle the past tense of the verbs discussed above and write whether they signal a change of state or **b** no change of state.

1. I was happy to see them win. \_\_\_\_\_ a
2. I wanted to make him laugh, but was unsuccessful. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Upon seeing the mess she became furious. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I knew they weren't coming even before you told me. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I was excited for a whole month before our vacation. \_\_\_\_\_
6. When she looked at me I knew something was wrong. \_\_\_\_\_

**In Spanish** The **preterite** of verbs like **ponerse** and **sentirse** can indicate *changes in emotional state*, whereas **estar** implies *no change*. Instead, **estar** is used to talk about being or feeling a certain way *for a given period of time*.

**Se puso** nerviosa durante el examen. (change)

**Me sentí** feliz cuando vi que mis amigos estaban bien. (change)

**Estuviste** furioso toda la tarde. (no change)

The **preterite** of **querer** or **saber** refer only to *changes in a mental or emotional state*. **Querer** is translated as *to want (and set out) to do something or to try to do something*, and **no querer** means *to refuse (to do something)*. **Saber** means *to know, to realize, or to find out*.

**Quiso** salir por la ciudad él solo. He wanted to go out on the town alone.

**Supe** entonces la verdad de tu vida. I found out the truth about your life.

**PRETERITE WITH MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL STATES**

**B** Circle the preterite of the verbs discussed on the previous page and write whether they signal **a** a change of state, or **b** no change of state.

1. Se pusieron muy contentos cuando te vieron ir. \_\_\_\_\_ **a**
2. Quise hacerle reír, pero no lo conseguí. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Se sintió herida cuando no la invitaron a la fiesta. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Aquel día supo que no podía dejar el carro en la calle. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Estuve cansado todo el fin de semana. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Pedro quiso salir con Gloria, pero ella no quiso salir con él. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Entonces Pedro se puso muy triste. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Estuvo deprimido toda una semana. \_\_\_\_\_

**C** Tell a friend what happened yesterday, and how people reacted. Use the preterite of each verb given in the infinitive.

1. mi padre / querer / ir / campo / con todos / pero / mi madre / no querer / ir  
Mi padre quiso ir al campo con todos pero mi madre no quiso ir.
2. mi padre / sentirse / herido / pero / luego / saber / que / iba a llover  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. yo / estar / triste / toda la mañana / pero / ponerme / contento / por la tarde  
 \_\_\_\_\_
4. por la tarde / mi madre / querer / ir / al parque  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. todos nosotros / querer / ir / con ella  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. mi padre / saber / que / ya / no llovía más  
 \_\_\_\_\_
7. mis padres / estar / enojado / toda la mañana / pero / ponerse / felices  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**D** Translate these sentences into Spanish. How do you say **was** in each case? What does it depend on?

- a. I **was** happy all week. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I **was** happy when it began to rain. \_\_\_\_\_