

Los Irregulares del Pretérito — Hoja 3

El grupo del YO — Cambios ortográficos

Verbos regulares en sonido, irregulares en escritura · Solo en yo · A2

◆ What makes this group different

The good news first: These verbs are completely **regular in every person except yo**. Tú, él, nosotros, ustedes — all follow the normal preterite endings you already know. The only thing that changes is the **spelling of the yo form**, and only to preserve the same sound the verb always had.

Why does the spelling change? Spanish spelling rules require that certain letter combinations keep the same sound. When the regular yo ending **-é** is added, the original consonant would change sound without the spelling adjustment. The change is phonetic, not grammatical.

The three spelling changes — and why they happen

Ends in...	yo changes to...	Example	Why?
-car	-qué	<i>buscar</i> → <i>busqué</i>	The letter c before e would sound like /s/. To keep the hard /k/ sound, it becomes qu.
-gar	-gué	<i>llegar</i> → <i>llegué</i>	The letter g before e would sound like /x/ (like j). To keep the hard /g/ sound, it becomes gu.
-zar	-cé	<i>empezar</i> → <i>empecé</i>	The letter z before e is avoided in standard Spanish spelling. It becomes c, which gives the same /s/ sound.

◆ Verbos comunes de cada grupo

Grupo -CAR → -qué	Grupo -GAR → -gué	Grupo -ZAR → -cé
buscar → busqué to search/look for tocar → toqué to touch / to play (music) sacar → saqué to take out	llegar → llegué to arrive pagar → pagué to pay jugar → jugué to play (sport/game) entregar → entregué to hand in / deliver	empezar → empecé to start comenzar → comencé to begin cruzar → crucé to cross abrazar → abracé to hug

practicar → **practiqué** to practice
explicar → **expliqué** to explain
marcar → **marqué** to mark / to score

colgar → **colgué** to hang up
apagar → **apagué** to turn off

organizar → **organicé** to organize
almorzar → **almorzcé** * to have lunch

* **Almorzar** is special: it is both an **-zar** verb (spelling change in yo: **almorcé**) AND a stem-changing verb (o → ue in present). In the preterite, only the spelling change applies — the stem stays regular.

WRITTEN PRODUCTION EXERCISES

Each exercise is different. Read the instructions carefully before writing.

◆ EJERCICIO 01 — ¿Regular o cambio ortográfico?

Instructions: Each item gives you a verb and a subject. Write the correct preterite form. If the subject is **yo**, apply the spelling change if needed. If the subject is anything else, the verb is completely regular. Write **R** (regular) or **SC** (spelling change) in the last column.

#	Verb	Subject	Preterite form	R or SC?
01	buscar	yo		
02	llegar	ella		
03	empezar	nosotros		
04	pagar	yo		
05	tocar	tú		
06	cruzar	ellos		
07	practicar	yo		
08	jugar	usted		
09	comenzar	yo		
10	colgar	nosotros		

◆ EJERCICIO 02 — El primer día de trabajo

Instructions: Complete the story using the correct preterite form of each verb in parentheses. All verbs belong to the spelling-change group, and all the blanks are in the **yo form**. Apply the correct spelling change for each one.

El primer día de trabajo

Ayer fue mi primer día en el trabajo nuevo. Por la mañana, _____ (buscar) mis llaves durante diez minutos. Después _____ (cruzar) la ciudad en metro porque no quise ir en coche.

Llegué con cinco minutos de antelación, así que _____ (aprovechar) para organizar mis cosas. A las nueve en punto _____ (empezar) la reunión con mi nuevo equipo. Yo _____ (explicar) mi experiencia anterior y todos escucharon con atención.

A mediodía _____ (almorzar) con mis compañeros. Por la tarde, _____ (entregar) mi primer informe. Al salir, _____ (apagar) mi computadora y _____ (marcar) el día en el calendario como el inicio de algo nuevo.

◆ EJERCICIO 04 — ¿Qué hiciste ayer?

Instructions: Look at each prompt. Write a natural sentence in the first person (yo) answering the question. Each answer must use a spelling-change verb from the reference table. You decide whether your answer is positive or negative.

Example: Did you pay for something this week? → Sí, pagué el alquiler el lunes. OR No, no pagué nada esta semana.

01 Did you arrive late to something recently?

→

02 Did you look for something online this week?

→

03 Did you play any sport or game recently?

→

04 Did you hand in or deliver something at work or in class?

→

05 Did you start something new this month?

→

06 Did you hug someone special recently?

→

◆ EJERCICIO 05 — Producción libre — Tu semana

Instructions: Write 7 original sentences about your real week using spelling-change verbs. You must include at least **one verb from each of the three groups** (-car, -gar, -zar). Write only in the **yo form** for this exercise. Mark the group of each verb you use.

- ▷ At least **2 verbs from -car** (*buscar, tocar, sacar, practicar, explicar, marcar...*)
- ▷ At least **2 verbs from -gar** (*llegar, pagar, jugar, entregar, colgar, apagar...*)
- ▷ At least **2 verbs from -zar** (*empezar, comenzar, cruzar, abrazar, organizar, almorzar...*)

1. Grupo: _____

2. Grupo: _____

3. Grupo: _____

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