

Past events – A night out

This episode is about using the past tenses when we narrate past actions/ events.

In previous episodes we learned/learnt how to speak about our **habits and routines in the present**, and we learned/learnt that we use the **present tenses** to express that. Do you remember the episode called Story-telling: Movies? Well, in **story-telling** we use the **present** tenses, too, but not to express habits & routines. We use them to express dramatic effect, to make our story *feel*/more real! Listen again to those episodes on routines (My Day, My routines) and on story-telling (Movies). Try to notice the use of the tenses.

The difference with the use of **pasts to narrate past actions** or events is sometimes blurred (desdibujada, borrosa) because **sometimes** when we are narrating a past event, we **switch to the story-telling mode!** We do this when we wish to bring the listener to the situation we were in. It's like a dramatic resource. Notice how you use the presents and the pasts when you speak **Spanish**. "The problem" is just like in English. Post your questions on the Talking People Forums if you like. I know this issue can get complicated at times! Here is the web address:

<http://www.talkingpeople.net/tp/forum/forumdisplay.php?fid=46>

But always remember you use...

1. **Pasts**: when you narrate your **past actions/events**. You only switch to the present a) if you know how to (avoid it if unsure!) and b) if you want to describe an atmosphere, a mood in that situation, and you want the listener to *feel* that.
2. **Presents**: when you tell a **joke** or a **story** (true or fictional), for example, the plot in a novel or a film. We could narrate this in the past, but we use the present to make the story more real, for dramatic effect.

Let's get started now! (The vocabulary and spelling are British, OK?)

I'm going to speak about my last night out.

Last Friday evening I went out for a drink with three friends. We wore casual clothes -- jeans! I was also wearing my favourite T-shirt. It's got the title of one of my favourite books, *Wuthering Heights*, by Emily Brontë. Well, we wanted to go to the cinema and then for a drink, but we had no money for both, so we just went out for a drink and something to eat. The place was in the city centre. It was really nice! We had a few beers and something to eat – some typical Spanish meals called "tapas". I loved it!

We were all very tired because it was the end of the working week, but we were very happy because it was the beginning of the weekend! We talked all night, but not about work! We talked about lives, and about books and films, oh and about travelling, too! We had a great time!