

Translating the Imperfect Tense (see p. 60 of *Fundamental Greek Grammar*)

1. Continuous: ἔλειπον = “I was leaving.”
2. Habitual: ἔλειπον = “I used to leave.”
3. Inceptive: ἔλειπον = “I began to leave.”
4. Conative: ἔλειπον = “I tried to leave.”
5. Iterative/repeated: ἔλειπον = “I repeatedly left.”
6. Emphatic: ἔλειπον = “I did leave.”

The imperfect tense is not used to show simple action in past time. This is the use of the aorist tense. The imperfect tense shows extra meaning in the past time, typically some kind of connection between the subject and the verb.

ἔλειπον = “I left” (focus on the action itself)

ἔλειπον = “I was leaving” (focus on connection between the subject and the action)

Context is important to determine how the imperfect tense is being used in any sentence.