

Used to

We use used to to talk about habits and states.

We use *used to* when we refer to things in the past which are no longer true. It can refer to repeated actions or to a state or situation.

- ❖ He used to play football for the local team, but he's too old now.
- ❖ I used to live in Germany (I don't live there now)

Used to (2)

We sometimes use adverbs of frequency and other time phrases with *used to*.

- ❖ We always used to go to the seaside in the summer when I was a child.
- ❖ We used to eat there every week.

N.B.

1) to talk about habits in the present → present simple

❖ We usually go for a walk in the park every day.

2) We don't normally use used to for repeated actions that lasted a short period of time. We use the past simple instead.

❖ I cycled to work every day last week.

3) We use the past simple for past permanent states.

❖ The skyscrapers were taller than anything I'd ever seen.

Used to (3)

► Negative: *didn't use to*

The negative of *used to* is most commonly *didn't use(d) to*. Sometimes we write it with a final *-d*, sometimes not. Both forms are common, but many people consider the form with the final *-d* to be incorrect, and you should not use it in exams

► Questions

The most common form of question is auxiliary *did* + *use(d) to*. Many people consider the form with a final *-d* to be incorrect, and you should not use it in exams:

- ❖ I think we met once, a couple of years ago. Did you use to work with Kevin Smith?

Used to or would?

We can use *used to* or *would* to talk about people's habits in the past.

When we use them both together, *used to* most commonly comes first, as it sets the scene for the actions being reported:

- ❖ When we were kids, we used to invent amazing games. We would imagine we were the government and we would make crazy laws that everyone had to obey.

Used to or would? (2)

Used to, but not *would*, can describe a state or situation which is no longer true:

❖ We used to live in Manchester.

Not: We would live in Manchester.

❖ ‘The Townhouse’ used to be a Greek restaurant. It’s Italian now.

Not: ‘The Townhouse’ would be a Greek restaurant ...

Used to or would? (3)

In short, we don't use *would* to talk about states. We only use it to talk about repeated actions in the past.

- ❖ We used to own a really nice house in the countryside (state)
- ❖ I would always do my homework at the last minute when I was at school (repeated action in the past)