

GRAMMAR

Would and used to

LEVEL

Upper-Intermediate
(B2)

NUMBER

EN_B2_1112G

LANGUAGE

English



Learning outcomes

- I can use 'would' and 'used to' to talk about the past.
- I can talk about memories in greater detail.

Used to + bare infinitive

- We use **used to** + **bare infinitive** for **things in the past** which are **no longer true**.
- It can refer to **repeated actions** (1, 2) or to a **state** or **situation** (3, 4).

Examples

I **used to go** to the market every Saturday.

Our children **used to play** outside all the time.

Mark **used to be** a vegetarian.

Holly **used to live** in Brazil.



We don't need to specify a **time period** with **used to**.

Negative: *didn't use to*

- We form a **negative** construction using: *didn't use to* + **bare infinitive**.
- The negative form contrasts the present with the past when **something has changed**.

Examples

I *didn't use to like* coffee, but now I love it!

People *didn't use to travel* abroad that often.



Drop the **-d** of *used to*
after *didn't*!



Question forms

- We use **did** + **use to**...? to form **questions**.



Didn't you **use to** work as a software developer?

How **did** you **use to** spend your free time at university?



Fill in the gaps

Use the correct form of *used to*.

Sally: Jane! I heard you _____ live in France!
What a coincidence! So did I!

Jane: Oh, really! Did you _____ eat
croissants for breakfast every morning too?

Sally: Oh, yes, I _____ live right next to a
really great bakery. It was fantastic! I miss it.

I _____ like coffee before I moved to
France, but after three years there I loved it.

I drank an espresso almost every morning with
my croissant!





Forms questions using *used to*

1 Love / sports / younger



Did you **use to love** sports when you were younger?

2 What time / finish / school



3 Before your current job / do / for a living



4 At school / subjects / enjoy



5 Celebrate / birthday / as a child



6 Think / being an adult / would be like

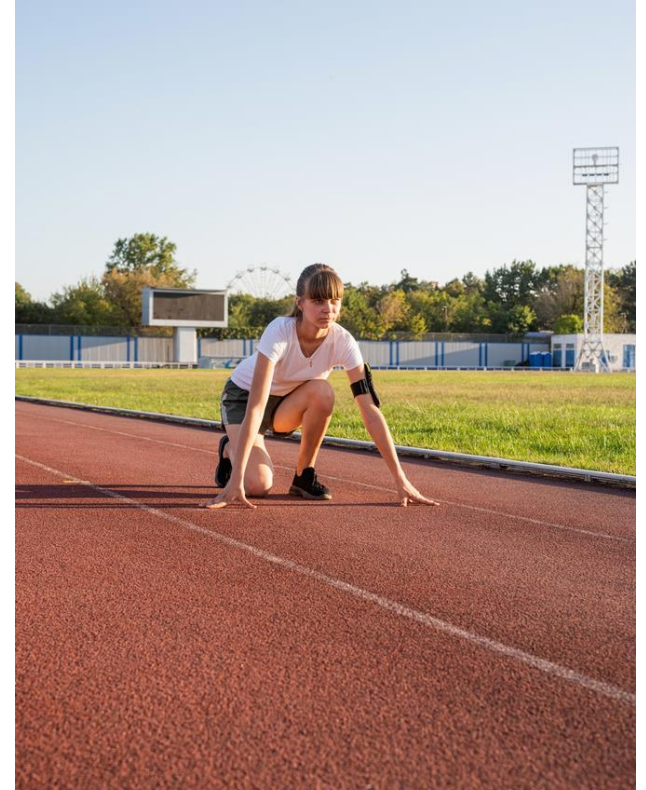




Time to practise!

**Choose two
questions from
the last activity.**

**Ask and answer with a
classmate. Then swap roles!**





Would + bare infinitive

- We can use **would** + **bare infinitive** for **repeated actions** in the past that don't happen anymore.
- We often establish a **time period** to make it clear we are talking about the past.

Examples

As a child, my parents **would take** me to the beach every summer.

In those days, people **would obtain** water from the village well.

Back then, I **would spend** all my money on CDs.

We **would go** and **stay** with our grandparents **during the holidays**.



Would for past actions
can sound more nostalgic
than **used to**!

Used to or would?

- We can use either **used to** or **would** for repeated **actions**.
- For past **states**, we can **only** use **used to**.

Actions

I used to / would **play** tennis a lot.

Tom used to / would **cry** a lot as a baby.

We used to / would **call** each other a lot.

I used to / would **go** to church every week.

States

I used to **live** in France.

Tom used to **be** handsome.

We used to **have** a large house.

There used to **be** a church there.



Fill in the gaps

Form a sentence using *would* or *used to* + the verb in italics. Which sentences can use either?

- 1 I _____ (*be*) a really sporty kid. I played football, tennis, golf and badminton!
- 2 My brother _____ (*go*) swimming every day after school.
- 3 My grandmother _____ (*live*) in a small house by the beach.
- 4 My grandfather _____ (*leave*) for work extremely early, sometimes before sunrise.
- 5 My parents _____ (*say*), 'Just do your best – that's all that matters!'



Complete the sentences for you

Then, **compare** answers with a partner in **breakout rooms**.

**As a child, I would
never...**

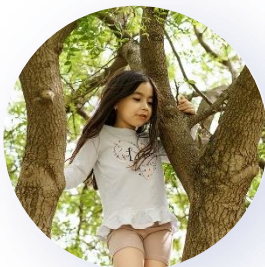


**My parents always
used to...**



Using *used to* and *would* together

- We often see both forms together when talking about **memories**.
- We use **used to** to **introduce the topic**; **would** sounds unnatural here.



As children, we **used to** play outside all the time. We **would** spend hours climbing trees. I wasn't a very good climber and **would** always come home covered in scratches! It was such an innocent yet simple time!

My dad **used to** be in charge of pocket money. Every week, he **would** give me and my sister ten pounds and we **would** go straight to the corner shop to buy as many sweets as we could!





Writing

1. **Think of** one thing you miss from when you were younger.
2. **Write** a short paragraph (40-60 words) describing your memories of it.
3. **Share** your paragraph with the class.

- A hobby you gave up
 - A home you loved
- A favourite holiday destination
 - An old hair or clothing style
- A TV series that no longer exists





End of the lesson

Idiom

to be etched on your mind

Meaning: to remember something because it has made a strong impression on you.

Example: Those months I would spend with my grandparents are still **etched on my mind**.



Additional practice



Form sentences

Make an affirmative sentence, negative sentence or question using ***used to***.

1 I / live in a house when I was a child.



I **used to** live in a house when I was a child.

2 We / go to the coast every summer?



3 She / like baking cakes, but now she loves it.



4 He / not / smoke



5 She / be able to speak Spanish, but she's forgotten it all now.



6 You / enjoy going to school?





Choose the possible options

- 1 I *would* / *used to* go stay with my grandparents every summer.
- 2 There *would* / *used to* be a cinema on that corner, but now it's a car park.
- 3 Sarah *would* / *used to* play tennis a lot when she was younger; yet she rarely does now.
- 4 My partner *would* / *used to* live in London, then two years ago he moved to Manchester.
- 5 My parents *would never* / *didn't use to* worry as much about money as they do now.



In some cases, **both** options are correct!



Write sentences

Choose two topics below. Write a sentence for each using ***used to*** or ***would***.

**A food you never liked,
but do now.**

**A sport you no
longer play.**

**A hairstyle you had
in the past.**

**A place where you've
lived, but don't now.**



Answer key

P. 6: 1. used to, 2. use to, 3. used to, 4. didn't use to

P. 7: 2. What time did you use to finish school?
3. Before your current job, what did you use to do for a living?
4. At school, which subjects did you use to enjoy?
5. How did you use to celebrate your birthday as a child?
6. What did you use to think being an adult was like?

P. 11: 1. used to be
2. would go / used to go
3. used to live
4. would / used to leave
5. would / used to say

P. 18: 2. Did we use to go to the coast every summer?
3. She didn't use to like baking cakes, but now she loves it.
4. He didn't use to smoke.
5. She used to be able to speak Spanish, but now she's forgotten it all.
6. Did you use to enjoy going to school?



Answer key

- P. 19:**
1. would or used to
 2. used to
 3. would or used to
 4. used to
 5. would never or didn't use to



Summary

used to + bare infinitive

- We use ***used to + bare infinitive*** for **things in the past** which are **no longer true**.
- It can refer to **repeated actions** or to a **state** or **situation**.
- *I **used to go** to the market every Saturday* (repeated action); *Holly **used to live** in Brazil* (state)

didn't use to and did ... use to?

- We form a **negative** using: ***didn't use to + bare infinitive***. It means something **has changed between past and present**. e.g. *I **didn't use to like** coffee, but now I love it!*
- We use ***did + use to...?*** to form **questions**. e.g. *How **did you use to spend** your free time as a child?*

would + bare infinitive

- We can use ***would + bare infinitive*** for **repeated actions** in the past that don't happen anymore.
- We often establish a **time period** to make it clear we are talking about the past.
- e.g. *As a child, my parents **would take** me to the beach every summer.*

would or used to?

- We can use ***used to*** or ***would*** for repeated **actions**. For past **states**, we can **only** use ***used to***.
- *I **used to play** / **would play** tennis a lot as a teenager.*
- *There **used to be** a train station there. (**not** would be)*



Vocabulary

used to

didn't use to

software developer

well

nostalgic

