

Grammar Reference

'Used to' and 'would'

Meaning and use

We can use **used to** and **would** to talk about things we did regularly in the past, but we don't do now. We use **used to** for either habits or states in the past. **Would** is used only for past habits, not for past states.

*Elena **used to** visit her grandson on Saturdays, but now she visits him on Sundays. (past habit)*

*On Fridays, we **would** take a long walk after lunch. (past habit)*

*The weather **didn't use to** be so cold in May. (past state)*

NOT: The weather **wouldn't** be so cold in May.

Used to and **would** often have the idea of comparison or change over time.

*Elena **used to** visit her grandson on Saturdays but now she visits him on Sundays.*

*We **would** take a long walk after lunch (but now we do not.)*

*The weather **didn't use to** be so cold in May. (now, it is cold in May)*

Form

The different forms of these phrases are **used to + infinitive (without 'to')** or **did / did not / didn't + use to + infinitive (without 'to')**, and **would / would not / wouldn't + infinitive (without 'to')**.

Used to is the simple past. **Use to** is used in negative and question forms. It is used for both habits and states.

Used to - Habit

*Isabel **used to** sing in a band.*

*Pablo **didn't use to** drive to work.*

***Did** John **use to** study with you?*

Used to - State

*Bob **used to** be much shorter.*

*I **didn't use to** like art.*

***Did** Wayne **use to** belong to the debate team?*

***Didn't** Margaret **use to** hate flying?*

Would - Habit (not for states)

*Since I always had that day free, I **would** shop for groceries every Monday.*

*Since we were always in a hurry, we **wouldn't** stop for tea on Fridays.*

***Would** you often stay for lunch?*

Take note: adverbs

Used to and **would** already show that something happened in the past. We don't usually add adverbs. But, if you want to stress a time period, you can add an adverb.

*I **didn't use to** travel **frequently**, but now I do.*

*Nancy **would** go for a jog **every day**, but now she doesn't have enough time.*

