

# Grammar Used To

## Repeated Actions in the Past with Used to 2

- We need **used to + infinitive** to compare the past with the present: *'I **used to** eat fish, but now I don't.'* We use it to discuss repeated actions (habits) and states in the past which are not true now.
- Time: completed actions in general past – not a specific time: *'I **used to** play the piano **last Friday** / **in 1989**.'*
- Positive: **used to** / Negative: **did not use to** / Question: **did you use to?** (auxiliary verb: did)
- Note: **use to** sounds the same as **used to** because of connected speech, but we should write **use to**.
- The second clause is often **present simple** or **present perfect**, e.g. *'I **used to** like Uno, but I **haven't** played in ages.'*
- If nothing has changed, we can use **still**: *'I **used to** like pasta and I **still** do.'*
- Can be used as an alternative to past simple; not connected with verb **'to use'** or the construction **'get / be used to'**.
- We can use **would** in a similar way to used to – especially to tell a story – but not with past states, e.g. be, have, etc.

|   |                           |     |  |   |
|---|---------------------------|-----|--|---|
| when I was younger / in my youth<br>when I was a child / a teenager<br>when I was at school / university<br>in the past / a few years ago<br>when I worked at... / for...<br>[no time = general past] | I used to +<br>infinitive | BUT | now / nowadays / these days / lately<br>at the moment / currently / presently<br>recently<br>since then<br>for the last few... | present<br>simple /<br>present<br>perfect |
|---|---------------------------|-----|--|---|

Activities – you might think of more!

- Write sentences with **used to + infinitive** in positive (+), negative (-), or question form (?). Use the information below, which is about the past. Imagine what has changed, e.g. *'Mandy **used to** drive a Ford Ka, but now she drives a Fiat.'*
- Choose a category. Ask your partner a question with used to. They answer. You guess whether it is true or false.
- Your partner says a category + name and you have x seconds to say / write the sentence with used to (+), (-), or (?).
- Tell a story with each situation, e.g. *'Mandy **used to** buy jewellery for herself, but now she buys clothes for her kids...'*
- Write comparative sentences, e.g. *'Mandy **used to** read chick lit, **while / whereas** Estelle **used to** read Cosmo.'*

| Category:      | Mandy (Philip's Wife): | Jacqui (Philip's Mum): | Estelle (Philip's Aunt): |
|----------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| transport      | + Ford Ka              | - Jaguar               | ? chauffeur              |
| health         | - eczema               | ? as fit as a fiddle   | + many ailments          |
| work problem   | ? too much to do       | + manager              | - housekeeper            |
| reading        | + chick lit            | - Marion Keyes         | ? Cosmo                  |
| TV programmes  | - Cold Feet            | ? Ally McBeal          | + Z Cars                 |
| exercise       | ? gym                  | + rowing machine       | - treadmill              |
| shopping       | + jewellery            | - Waitrose             | ? Fortnum & Mason        |
| computer       | - laptop               | ? iPad                 | + Dell                   |
| fears          | ? marriage ending      | + losing friends       | - being put in a home    |
| favourite song | + Despacito            | - Sara – Fleetwood Mac | ? The Way We Were        |
| education      | - MBA                  | ? RSA Typing Course    | + University of Life     |
| bad habits     | ? biting nails         | + impatience           | - not tipping waiters    |
| holidays       | + Ibiza                | - Caribbean            | ? Saint Kitts            |
| languages      | - French and German    | ? none                 | + Greek (beginner)       |
| driving        | ? infrequently         | + to the coast         | - enjoy driving          |