

Grammar – Used To

Repeated Actions in the Past with Used to 1

- 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 when I was a child / a teenager when I was at school / university in the past / a few years ago when I worked at... / for... [no time = general past]	I used to + infinitive	BUT	now / nowadays / these days / lately at the moment / currently / presently recently since then for the last few...	present simple / present perfect
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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. *'Philip **used to** live in Newcastle, but now he lives in London.'*
- 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. *'Philip **used to** live in Newcastle, but he moved to London in 2014 because...'*
- Write comparative sentences, e.g. *'Alan **used to** live in a house, **while** / **whereas** his dad **used to** live in a bungalow.'*

Category:	Philip:	Alan (Philip's Dad):	Ralph (Philip's Grandad):
home	+ Newcastle	- house	? bungalow
family	- married	? married	+ live alone
work	? shop assistant	+ courier	- racing driver
hobbies	+ video games	- pub quizzes	? rambling
friends	- Tim and the uni gang	? Roland and Marta	+ many good friends
appearance	? beard	+ hippy	- grey hair
music	+ rave	- Fleetwood Mac	? Frank Sinatra
sport	- Manchester United	? golf	+ rugby
clothes	? shell suit	+ flares	- three-piece suit
phone	+ Android	- iPhone 8	? landline
dental health	- excellent	? good	+ poor
ambition	? to be a pilot	+ to get promoted	- to live to be a hundred
weight	+ average build	- overweight	? very slim
money	- doing OK	? rich	+ fairly well off
breakfast	? corn flakes with milk	+ a boiled egg	- sardines

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Answers will vary. Sample answers:

1. Category – family:

- Philip didn't use to be married, but now he is.
- Did Alan use to be married? / Yes, he did, but now he is divorced.
- Ralph used to live alone, but now he lives in a care home.

2. Here is a sample conversation based on the category of music:

- A: Did you use to go to concerts when you were younger?
- B: Yes, I did. I went to a lot of concerts.
- A: Like what?
- B: Er, pop concerts. Human League, Squeeze – that kind of thing.
- A: I think that's true.
- B: Yes, it is true.

Students could make it competitive and score points, e.g. ten points for A, if they guess correctly, and ten points for B if A does not guess correctly – and vice versa. You could see who gets to a hundred points first.

3. Here is a sample conversation:

- A: I choose 'appearance' and 'Ralph'.
- B: OK. Ralph didn't use to have grey hair, but now he does.
- A: Great!

As in 2., above, students could make it competitive, scoring points for writing or saying a correct sentence within the time limit.

4. See worksheet for an example. Students may enjoy improvising a story, role play, podcast, or video drama based on the information about the family in both worksheets.

5. See worksheet for an example.