

## 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 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. *'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

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*Answers will vary. Sample answers:*

1. Category – health:

- Mandy didn't use to have eczema, but now she does.
- Did Jacqui use to be as fit as a fiddle? / Yes, she did – and she still is.
- Estelle used to have many ailments, but now she is reasonably healthy.

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

- A: Did you use to belong to a gym?
- B: No, I didn't. I couldn't afford it.
- A: Why not?
- B: The gym near me used to cost £30 per month.
- A: Wow! That's expensive. I think that's true.
- B: No, it isn't true. I used to go to the gym twice a week.

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 'driving' and 'Jacqui'.
- B: OK. Jacqui used to drive to the coast every weekend, but now she goes once a month.
- A: Well done!

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.