

Used to, be used to and get used to

CEFR B1-B2 · 20 questions · A4 / US Letter

Used to plus the base verb looks at the past. Be used to and get used to take a noun or an -ing form and describe comfort with something.

The rule

Used to: a past habit or state

- Form: used to plus the base verb: "I used to live in Rome."
- The habit or state is finished and is not true now.
- Questions: "Did you use to live in Rome?" The d disappears after did.
- Negatives: "I did not use to like coffee" or "I never used to like coffee."

Be used to: accustomed

- Form: be used to plus a noun or a gerund: "I am used to the noise", "She is used to working late."
- The phrase describes a current state: something is normal and comfortable now.
- Be can take any tense: was used to, is used to, will be used to.
- The to here is a preposition, so a verb after it takes the -ing form.

Get used to: becoming accustomed

- Form: get used to plus a noun or a gerund: "He is getting used to the climate."
- Get focuses on the change from uncomfortable to comfortable.
- It works in all tenses: got used to, is getting used to, will get used to.
- A beginner often says "I will never get used to it" and then does.

The -ing trap

- After be used to and get used to, a verb takes -ing: used to getting up early.
- After used to for a past habit, the verb has no -ing and no to: used to get up early.
- Compare: "I used to get up early" is the past habit. "I am used to getting up early" is present comfort.
- The -ing form is a gerund, so it behaves like a noun after the preposition to.

Spelling and sound

- Used to is pronounced with a /s/ sound, and the d is silent: use to.
- In negatives and questions, write use to after did: did not use to, did you use to.
- Be used to and get used to keep the /zd/ sound and use used in every form.
- Would can replace used to for repeated actions in the past, but not for past states: "We would visit every summer" works; "I would live in Rome" does not mean the same as "I used to live in Rome."

Questions

Write your answer on the line under each question. Check your work with the answer key on the last page.

1. I ___ in Rome when I was a student.

2. She ___ tennis every weekend before her injury.

3. I ___ the cold weather now; it does not bother me.

4. He ___ night shifts after two years in the job.

5. They ___ the new system at work.

6. ___ you ___ in Paris before the move?

7. I ___ enjoy coffee, but I love it now.

8. She ___ long journeys before she moved abroad.

9. We will soon ___ the noise from the airport.

10. I cannot ___ up at five every morning.

11. My father ___ work in a factory.

12. She ___ the traffic in London now.

13. He is used to ___ under pressure.

14. I ___ like olives when I was a child.

15. Did she ___ wear glasses?

16. After a month, I am finally getting used to ___ early.

17. We ___ visit our grandparents every summer.

18. He will have to get used to ___ his own meals.

19. I was not used to ___ so early before this job.

20. There ___ be a cinema on this street.

Answer key

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1. **used to live** — A finished past state takes used to plus the base verb live.
2. **used to play** — A repeated past habit takes used to play with the base verb.
3. **am used to** — Be used to plus a noun describes present comfort with the cold weather.
4. **is used to working** — Be used to takes a gerund, so working follows the preposition to.
5. **are getting used to** — Get used to describes the process of adapting to something new.
6. **Did ... use to live** — After did, the past habit phrase becomes use to live without the d.
7. **did not use to** — The negative past habit takes did not use to plus the base verb.
8. **was used to** — Was used to plus a noun describes a past state of being accustomed.
9. **get used to** — Get used to works in the future for the process of adapting.
10. **get used to waking** — The to in get used to is a preposition, so waking takes the -ing form.
11. **used to** — A finished past habit takes used to plus the base verb work.
12. **is used to** — Be used to plus a noun describes present comfort with the traffic.
13. **working** — A verb after be used to takes the gerund working.
14. **did not use to** — The negative past habit takes did not use to plus the base verb like.
15. **use to** — After the auxiliary did, the phrase loses the d from used to: did she use to wear glasses?
16. **getting up** — Get used to takes the gerund getting up after the preposition to.
17. **used to** — A repeated past habit takes used to plus the base verb visit.
18. **cooking** — The preposition to in get used to takes the gerund cooking.
19. **waking up** — Be used to takes the -ing form, so waking up is correct.
20. **used to** — A past state that no longer exists takes used to plus the base verb be.