

# Would vs used to: past habits

CEFR A2-B1 • 20 questions • A4 / US Letter

Both describe the past, but would cannot describe states, and used to cannot repeat forever without a time frame.

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## The rule

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### Used to: habits and states

- Form: used to + base verb: "I used to walk to school."
- It covers repeated actions: "We used to visit our grandparents every Sunday."
- It also covers past states: "There used to be a shop here", "She used to have long hair."
- The important meaning is that the situation has changed. It is not true now.

### Would: repeated actions only

- Form: would + base verb: "Every summer we would swim in the lake."
- Would describes repeated actions in a past routine or story.
- Would cannot describe a state: "I would have a dog" does not mean "I used to have a dog".
- A time phrase like every day, often or in those years makes the repetition clear.

### Negative and questions with used to

- Negative: did not use to + base verb: "I did not use to like coffee."
- Question: Did you use to live here?
- After did, the d disappears from used: did not use to, did you use to.
- The negative with never is also common: "I never used to eat breakfast."

### Used to and be used to

- Used to + base verb describes a past habit: "I used to run every morning."
- Be used to + -ing means be accustomed to something: "I am used to running in the cold."
- Get used to + -ing means become accustomed: "She is getting used to the new job."
- The two patterns are different: one is about the past, the other about familiarity now.

### Choosing between them in a story

- Use used to for the background situation and for states: "We used to live by the sea."
- Use would for the repeated actions inside the story: "Every evening we would walk along the beach."
- They often appear together: "We used to have a little boat, and we would take it out on Sundays."
- If the sentence describes a state, only used to works.

## Questions

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

1. I \_\_\_ have a bicycle when I was ten.

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2. Every summer, we \_\_\_ swim in the river.

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3. There \_\_\_ be a bakery on this corner.

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4. He \_\_\_ smoke, but he quit last year.

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5. I did not \_\_\_ like olives when I was young.

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6. Did you \_\_\_ play tennis at school?

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7. She \_\_\_ be shy, but now she speaks to everyone.

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8. We \_\_\_ visit our grandparents every Sunday.

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9. I \_\_\_ living in a cold city now; it feels normal.

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10. He \_\_\_ always bring sweets when he visited.

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11. There \_\_\_ be a tall tree in front of the house.

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12. My father \_\_\_ read the newspaper after dinner every day.

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13. I never \_\_\_ eat breakfast before work.

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14. They \_\_\_ have a farm in the north.

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15. In those years, she \_\_\_ write a letter every week.

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16. We \_\_\_ not use to have a car, but now we do.

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17. He is getting \_\_\_ to the noise of the city.

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18. My grandmother \_\_\_ tell us stories before bed.

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19. I \_\_\_ be afraid of dogs when I was little.

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20. \_\_\_ you use to live near the beach?

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## Answer key

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1. **used to** — A past state uses **used to**; **would** cannot describe states.
2. **would** — **Would** describes a repeated past action with a time phrase such as every summer.
3. **used to** — A past state that has changed takes **used to**.
4. **used to** — **Used to** describes the past habit that has stopped.
5. **use to** — After **did**, the **d** disappears: **did not use to**.
6. **use to** — The question with **did** takes **use to**, without the **d**.
7. **used to** — A past state of personality takes **used to**.
8. **would** — **Would** describes the repeated visits in a past routine.
9. **am used to** — **Be used to + -ing** describes familiarity in the present.
10. **would** — **Would + always** describes a repeated past action.
11. **used to** — The existence of the tree was a past state, so **used to** is needed.
12. **would** — **Would** describes the repeated daily action in the past.
13. **used to** — **Never + used to** describes an old habit that has changed.
14. **used to** — Possession is a state, so **used to** is the correct choice.
15. **would** — **Would** describes the repeated writing habit in the story.
16. **did** — The negative of **used to** in the past is **did not use to**.
17. **used** — **Get used to + -ing** means become accustomed to something.
18. **would** — **Would** describes the repeated storytelling action.
19. **used to** — A past feeling is a state, so **used to** is needed.
20. **Did** — Past questions with **used to** start with **did** and keep the base form **use**.