

How to use 'used to' in English

Used to is used to talk about habits or actions that were repeated in the past, but are now over. In this lesson you will find many examples of sentences in English with used to, to help you understand better:

1 - CONSTRUCTION

Affirmative form: Used to is followed by the verbal base.

- He used to live in Tokyo.

Negative form: we use either *used not to*, or *didn't use to*. **It is necessary to remove the final -d of used** after *didn't* in writing (orally, it's ok)!

- I used not to be so skinny (= I didn't use to be so skinny).
- I didn't use to like mushrooms. (= I used not to like mushrooms)

Question form: simply use *Did (I, he, they...) use to...?* at the beginning of the sentence. Be careful, remember to remove the final "d" of used to the interrogative form in writing (orally, it's ok)!

- Did he really use to be a soldier?
- Did he use to smoke much?

2 - HOW TO USE USED TO

Used to is used to refer to an activity that has existed for some time and ended, or to talk about a habit in the past:

- He used to drink too much.
- I used to read a lot.
- She used to be my friend when I was at school.
- When I was a child, I used to walk to school everyday.

At the end of sentences:

- I smoke cigarettes much more now than I used to.
- My mother cooks better than she used to.

3 - A FEW TIPS

⚠ Be careful not to confuse *used to* with *be used to + verb -ing* (to be used to):

- I am used to get up early. (~~I am used to getting up early.~~) → I have the habit of waking up early.
- I used to getting up early. → I would get up early (usually).

⚠ In the same style, be careful not to confuse *used to* with *get*, *become* or *grow used to + verb -ing*

- You will get used to it.

⚠ Do not confuse the formula '*used to*' with the past participle of the verb to use!

- This room is used to store old furnitures.

⚠ There is no equivalent to '*used to*' in the present. To speak of habits in the present, we use frequency adverbs like *often*, *usually*, *never*, *always*...

- I usually go running at night.

⚠ It is sometimes possible to replace Used to with Would + infinitive (without to):

- We would go to Spain every year when I was a child.