



USED TO, WOULD & BE/GET USED TO

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1. Learn the Grammar

We use would + base verb to describe repeated actions or routines in the past, especially when telling stories or remembering earlier times.

- Every summer, we would visit our cousins.
- My father would read us a story before bed.
- On Saturdays, we would walk to the market.

We often use would with time expressions such as every summer, when I was young, on Sundays, and after school.

Important difference: We can use used to for past habits and past states. We generally use would for repeated past actions, not for past states.

- I used to live in a small town. ✓
- I would live in a small town. ✗ (not with this meaning)
- When we were children, we would ride our bikes after school. ✓

We can also use would to describe repeated actions in a story, but we usually introduce the past situation first. - We lived near the beach. Every evening, we would walk along the shore.

2. Used to or Would?

Complete each sentence with used to or would. Sometimes only one answer is suitable.

1. When I was a child, I _____ visit my aunt every school holiday.
2. I _____ have a pet rabbit, but it died when I was ten.
3. Every evening, my grandfather _____ sit on the balcony and read.
4. Our old house _____ have a large garden.
5. After dinner, we _____ play cards together.
6. She _____ be very quiet, but now she talks a lot.
7. Every winter, we _____ go to the mountains for a few days.
8. There _____ be a bakery opposite the school.

3. Complete the Story

Complete the story using **used to** or **would** and the verbs in brackets.

When I was young, my family _____ (live) in a quiet village. Our house _____ (have) a small garden, and my brother and I _____ (play) there after school. Every Saturday, we _____ (walk) to the local market with our mother. She _____ (buy) fresh fruit and vegetables, and we _____ (help) her carry the bags home. In the evenings, our grandfather _____ (tell) us funny stories. We _____ (laugh) so much that sometimes our grandmother would tell us to be quiet!

4. Correct the Mistakes

Rewrite each sentence correctly.

1. When I was young, I would have long hair.

2. Every Sunday, we would visit our grandparents.

3. She would be shy when she was a child.

4. My father used to tell us stories every night.

5. There would be a post office on this street. (You are describing a past situation, not a repeated action.)

6. _____

5. Speaking — A Memory from the Past

Tell your partner about a time in your childhood or early adult life.

Use these prompts:

- Where you lived
- What you did after school or work
- What your family did together
- What you enjoyed doing
- What your neighbourhood was like

Try to use *used to* for past states and *would* for repeated actions.

Your partner should ask two follow-up questions.

REAL ENGLISH BOX

When telling stories about the past, English speakers often use expressions like:

- “Every now and then ...” = occasionally.
- “We'd spend hours ...” = we would spend hours doing something.
- “Those were the days!” = I remember that time fondly.
- “We had a great time.” = We enjoyed ourselves.

Example: “During the summer holidays, we'd spend hours swimming in the river. Those were the days!”

Teacher's Key

Activity 2

1. used to / would
2. used to
3. would / used to
4. used to
5. would / used to
6. used to
7. would / used to
8. used to

Activity 3 — Suggested answers

1. used to live
2. used to have
3. would / used to play
4. would / used to walk
5. would / used to buy
6. would / used to help
7. would / used to tell
8. would / used to laugh

The first two blanks describe past situations, so used to is the natural choice. The repeated actions can take either form.

Activity 4

1. When I was young, I used to have long hair.
2. Correct.
3. She used to be shy when she was a child.
4. Correct.
5. There used to be a post office on this street.