PAST SIMPLE/USED TO/WOULD

TO EXPRESS PAST HABITS/ROUTINES

- **Simple Past= Used to**

  - What did people use(d) to do in the evenings before TV?
  - What did people do in the evening before TV?
  (Note: when questions and negatives are written, they often have did... used instead of did...use)
  - I liked playing tennis when I was younger
  - I used to like tennis when I was younger

  Although both forms are used, we prefer used to+infinitive to talk about past habits which are now finished. There is an idea that circumstances have changed when we use the form used to+infinitive.

- **Simple Past ≠ Used to**

  "Used to" refers to things that happened at an earlier stage of one's life and are now finished: there is an idea that circumstances have changed. It is not used simply to say what happened at a past time, or how long it took, or how many times it happened.

  - I studied very hard last year (not I used to study very hard last year)
  (simple past to say what happened at a past time)
  - I worked in La Felguera for 17 years (not I used to work in La Felguera for 17 years)
  (simple past to say how long)
  - Mary went to London five times last year (not Mary used to go to London five times last year)
  (simple past to say how often)

  **Exercise**

- **Used to= Would**

  Both can be used to refer to repeated actions and events in the past. Would sometimes suggests a feeling of nostalgia so is often used for personal reminiscences.
On winter days, we used to / would sit around the fire and tell stories. When I was a child, my sister used to / would take me to the cinema every Sunday.

**Used to ≠ Would**

1. When we refer to a past state, we can only use "used to"
   - I used to have / would have a Toyota Celica
   - Mary used to be / would be a teacher but she's now retired

**Exercises**
- [http://www.esl-lounge.com/student/grammar/3g11-used-to-would.php](http://www.esl-lounge.com/student/grammar/3g11-used-to-would.php)

Source: Practical English Usage - M. Swan

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