

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

<http://www.esl-lounge.com/student/grammar/3g80-intermediate-past-simple-or-used-to-gap-fill-exercise.php>

- **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.perfect-english-grammar.com/used-to-exercise-2.html>

<http://www.esl-lounge.com/student/grammar/3g11-used-to-would.php>

Source: Practical English Usage - M. Swan



www.cristinacabal.com