



Used to/would – Past habit and states

Used to

I **used to have** long hair.

I **used to play** the piano when I was a child.

I **used to be** a builder before I was a teacher.

What does used to mean here?

A past state or habit which is not true now.

What is the negative form?

I **used to** play the piano.

I **didn't use to** play the piano.

I **used to** have long hair

I **didn't used to** have long hair

What is the interrogative form?

Did you **use to** play the piano?

Did you **used to** have long hair?

Remember: Used to only exists in the past, to talk about present habit we use the present simple with adverbs of frequency.

I **usually/normally/tend to** go to the gym twice a week.



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Would

“**Would**” can replace “**used to**” in one of these sentences:

I **used to have** long hair.

I **used to play** the piano when I was a child.

I **used to be** a builder before I was a teacher.

with exactly the same meaning. In which sentence is **would** possible?

I **would/used to** play the piano when I was a child.

We can use “**would**” with the same meaning as “**used to**” only when we’re talking about past actions or habits **NOT when we’re talking about states**.

When I was at school I **would/used to get up** at 7 am. (get up = action/habit)

When I was a child I ~~would~~/used to **have** short hair. (have = state)

Look at the following sentences, decide if we can only use “**used to**” or if “**would**” is **also** possible.

When I lived in London I _____ eat fish and chips every Friday.

When I was at school we _____ play hopscotch with my friends.

When I was a kid I _____ like avocados. (try a negative here)

My granddad _____ have an old video player.

My brother _____ drive dangerously.

When I was a teenager I _____ love pop music, now I prefer jazz.



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Answers:

When I lived in London I **would/used to** eat fish and chips every Friday.

When I was at school we **used to/would** play hopscotch with my friends.

When I was a kid I **didn't use to/wouldn't** like avocados.

My granddad **used to/would** have an old video player.

My brother **used to/would** drive dangerously.

When I was a teenager I **used to/would** love pop music, now I prefer jazz.