

# USE TO

'Used to' shows that an action happened *continuously, habitually* or *frequently* during a period in the past, but not any longer.

## Used to: Functions

'Used to' can express two different meanings and both are related to the past:

- Past habitual actions
- Past states

## Past Habitual Action

In this usage, 'used to' refers to an action that was done *regularly or habitually in the past*, but is not done any longer. Here are some examples:

- I **used to** play the piano when I was a child.
- They **used to** go camping every summer.

## Past States

'Used to' can describe a state or condition that was *true in the past* but not anymore. For example:

- There **used to** be a bookstore here.
- She **used to** be very shy.

## Negation and Questions

Unlike modals, 'used to' cannot be used to form negative and interrogative structures and needs the supporting auxiliary '**did**' for this purpose. As a result of function of the past auxiliary, 'used to' loses the past marker '**-d**' and changes to '**use to**.' For example:

- **Did** he use to smoke?
- **Didn't** she use to go to our school?
- I **didn't** use to like olives.
- She **didn't** use to live here.

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However, if a negative adverb or negative pronoun is used to make the sentence negative, 'used to' can remain in its original form. For example:

- We **never** used to worry about money.



## Be/Get Used to

If 'used to' is used after the auxiliary 'be' or the verb 'get,' it is no longer a semi-modal; rather, it is a passive structure that shows someone is accustomed to a situation. This structure can refer to the **past, present, or future**. Compare the examples:

- I **used to** get up early every day.  
*This shows a habit in the past.*
- I **am** used to getting up early.  
*This shows the speaker is accustomed to the routine. Notice that in this case, a gerund follows 'used to.'*
- You'll eventually **get** used to getting up early.  
*This is not a semi-modal.*

## Review

'Used to' expresses two meanings, both in the past:

1. an activity that you did regularly in the past
2. a state that was true in the past, but not any longer

In both cases, it needs the auxiliary 'did' to form questions and negative sentences:

- She **used to** have long hair.
- She **didn't use to** have long hair.
- **Did she use to** have long hair?

### *Reference:*

*LanGeek. (2025). Used to. LanGeek.*

Recovered from: <https://langeek.co/en/grammar/course/31/used-to>