Aim: You will establish the difference between this two confusing topics.
Written by: Leticia Avila Herrera

**USED TO and WOULD for past habits**

**Affirmative forms**

*Used to* and *would* are both used for past habits. There is, however, a difference between the two. *Would* describes repeated *actions*, but not *states*, while *used to* can refer to both repeated actions and states.

*On Sundays my parents would always take me to dance school.*
*I used to hate dancing in those days.*

Compare these two sentences:

*From time to time he would get up and glance critically over his work and look at his models.*
*I would like to go home.*

The second sentence cannot refer to past time as the verb *like* expresses a state, not an action. Therefore it cannot express a past habit but only a present state. For the very same reason the following sentence is incorrect:

*While at school he would be the smartest kid in the class.*

Instead of *would* you need to use *used to*:

*While at school he used to be the smartest kid in the class.*

**Negative and interrogative forms**

As *used* in the structure *used to* is a *main verb* in the past simple tense, the interrogative and negative forms are:

*Did he use to be the smartest kid?*
*While at school he didn't use to be the smartest kid in the class.*


**Exercise**
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**Used to and would for past habits**

Read the sentences below and choose the correct answer which is in brackets.

1. I *(used to / would)* get free milk at school when I was a boy.

2. It *(used to / would)* be very hot in summer at that time.

3. He *(used to / would)* give her a lift to work in the days before she passed her test.

4. There *(used to / would)* be a lot of fun around here in the old days.

5. France *(used to / would)* be a monarchy but now it’s a republic.

6. I *(used to / would)* live alone when I was a student.

7. I *(used to / would)* like going to pop concerts when I was a teenager.

8. My father didn’t know that we *(used to / would)* borrow his car when he was at work.

9. When the weather was good, we *(used to / would)* go walking in the countryside.

10. The children *(used to / would)* stand up when an adult came into the class in the old days.

[Go to grammar](#)