

ENGLISH 3AC · SEMESTER 2

Used to: past habits, English 3AC

Use *used to* for past habits and states in English 3AC. Compare then and now, form questions and negatives, and practise with illustrated examples.

Key points

- *Used to* + base verb describes a past habit or state.
- After *did* or *didn't*, write *use to*, without *d*.
- Use past simple for one completed past event.

Learning goals

- Describe a past habit that has changed.
- Use *didn't use to* and *Did you use to...?*
- Compare a past state with a present state.

What does *used to* mean?

Used to describes a repeated past action or a past state that is no longer true. My grandfather *used to* walk to school means that walking was his usual way of getting there in the past. He lives near a bus stop now, so he takes the bus. The comparison makes the change clear.

You can also describe a state: There *used to be* a small shop here. This says that the shop existed before but does not exist there now. Use a base verb after *used to*: *used to play*, *used to live*, *used to be*. Do not use an *-ing* form in this pattern.



A then-and-now comparison can show a changed habit: He *used to* walk. Now he takes the bus.

How do you form negatives and questions?

In school writing, use *didn't use to* for a negative: He *didn't use to* have a computer. Use *Did ... use to...?* for a question: Did your grandfather *use to* walk to school? *Did* carries the past meaning, so *use* is written without the final *d*.

Answer a question with Yes, he did or No, he *didn't*. Practise the whole question and answer together. Do not mix this pattern with *be used to*, which means being familiar with something and follows a different structure. This lesson focuses only on past habits and states.

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THEN AND NOW

Use the contrast to make the change clear.

1 Past habit
He **used to** walk to school.



2 Past state
There **used to** be a shop here.



3 Present situation
Now he **takes** the bus.

Read the examples. Explain the pattern. Make your own sentence.

Use the contrast to make the change clear.

Can *used to* describe one event?

Use the past simple for one completed event: Yesterday, I walked to school. *Used to* is for a past pattern or state, so I *used to* walk to school yesterday is not a suitable way to describe that one journey. For a comparison paragraph, organise your ideas as before, a clear change, then now. Use accurate ordinary facts rather than assuming that every person had the same experience.

A worked example

A changed journey to school

When my grandfather was a pupil, he **used to** walk to school. He **didn't use to** carry a heavy bag. Now he **takes** the bus when he visits the town centre.

- *Used to* walk gives a past habit.
- *Didn't use to* carry is a negative past habit.

- Now introduces the present situation.

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AFFIRMATIVE, NEGATIVE, QUESTION

Use has no final d after did or didn't.

1 Affirmative
He used to cycle.



2 Negative
He didn't use to cycle.



3 Question
Did he use to cycle?

Read the examples. Explain the pattern. Make your own sentence.

Use has no final d after did or didn't.

How should I use this English 3AC lesson?

- Try the exercises before reading the answers.
- Explain a correction in your own words.
- Return to the examples when two structures look similar.

Exercises: try before reading the answers

1. A past habit

Complete: He used to ____ (walk) to school.

2. A negative

Correct: We didn't used to have a computer.

3. A question

Ask whether your uncle used to live in a village.

4. A past state

Complete: There used to _____ a shop here.

5. One event

Choose the better form: Yesterday I walked / used to walk to the library.

6. Then and now

Write two sentences comparing a past habit and a current habit.

Answers and explanations

1. A past habit

Walk. Use a base verb after used to.

2. A negative

We didn't use to have a computer. Use has no d after didn't.

3. A question

Did your uncle use to live in a village?

4. A past state

Be. Used to can describe a past state.

5. One event

Walked. Yesterday describes one completed event in this sentence.

6. Then and now

Possible answer: I used to draw after school. Now I read short stories. The comparison shows a change in a regular activity.

Frequently asked questions

How do I use used to in English 3AC?

Use used to + base verb for a past habit or state that has changed: He used to walk to school.

Is didn't used to correct in school writing?

Use didn't use to in the pattern taught here. Did already carries the past meaning.

What is the difference between used to and past simple?

Used to highlights a past habit or state. Past simple can describe a single completed event, such as a visit yesterday.

Revision resource: follow the units, instructions and pace set by your teacher.

[Read the full lesson and practise on MATHFJIB.](#)