

Used to

Die Konstruktion "used to" wird verwendet, um über Vergangenes (z.B. Gewohnheiten) zu berichten, das heute nicht mehr zutrifft. Im Deutschen wird sie meistens mit *damals* oder *früher einmal* – oder gar nicht – übersetzt.

- *I used to be a vegetarian, but now I eat meat.* – *Ich war früher Vegetarier, aber jetzt esse ich Fleisch.*

- *He used to be fat, but now he's thin.* – *Er war damals dick, aber heute ist er dünn.*

Besonders häufig gibt „used to“ wieder, dass etwas über einen längeren Zeitraum oder wiederholt geschah. Im Deutschen bleibt dies häufig unübersetzt.

- *When I was a kid, I used to play outside every day.* – *Als ich ein Kind war, habe ich jeden Tag draußen gespielt.*

Used to kann auch in Verneinungen verwendet werden. Man kann es sowohl mit *didn't* als auch mit *not* verneinen, doch die erste Variante ist gebräuchlicher. Meistens verwendet man jedoch in verneinten Sätzen einfach das simple past (3).

(1) *I didn't use to eat meat.*

(2) *I used not to eat meat.*

(3) *I didn't eat meat.*

EXERCISE 1 What did Peter do when he was a child?

Ex. ☺ *play the guitar* / ☹ *sing in the choir*

Peter used to play the guitar. He didn't use to sing in the choir.

a) ☺ *read a lot* / ☹ *watch TV*

b) ☺ *visit his grandma* / ☹ *travel abroad*

c) ☺ *build tree houses* / ☹ *go to the beach*

d) ☺ *walk to school* / ☹ *take the bus to school*

e) ☺ *phone his friends* / ☹ *email his friends*

f) ☺ *live in a small village* / ☹ *live in a big city*

EXERCISE 2 Complete these sentences using *used to*.

a) Today Joe always does his homework. But when he was in 5th grade, he *didn't use to do his homework*.

b) Today Joe always gets good marks. But when he was younger

c) Today Joe doesn't copy from his neighbor. But back then

d) Today Joe doesn't throw paper balls at his neighbor. But in 5th grade, he

EXERCISE 3 Before he moved to New York, Sam used to live and work on a small farm. Which things did he do there, and which not? Use *used to* / *didn't use to*.

- a) Sam _____ milk the cows every morning.
 b) He _____ take the subway to work.
 c) He _____ feed the chickens.
 d) He _____ get up early every morning.
 e) He _____ drive a tractor.
 f) He _____ work in an office.
 g) He _____ meet lots of new people every day.
 h) He _____ live in an expensive apartment.

EXERCISE 4 Write five sentences about things you used to and didn't use to do as a child.

EXERCISE 5 *used to*. Fill in "*used to*" or "*didn't use to*".

- a) Jane *used to* work as a nurse. Now she's a doctor and has a private practice.
 b) She _____ work night shifts at the hospital.
 c) She _____ make the beds for the patients.
 d) She _____ make as much money as she does now.
 e) She _____ enjoy her work; she likes being a doctor better than being a nurse.

EXERCISE 6 *used to*. Translate the sentences into English using *used to*.

- a) Hast du früher immer deine Wäsche selbst gewaschen? – Nein, meine Mutter hat es immer getan.
 b) Ich habe früher nie gebastelt.
 c) Früher hat er anderen nie geholfen.
 d) Sie hat früher oft nachts gearbeitet.
 e) Die Leute haben früher viele Briefe geschrieben; heute schreiben sie E-Mails.
 f) Als ich im ersten Schuljahr war, hatte ich keinen eigenen Schreibtisch.
 g) Peter hat früher nicht so viel Geld verdient wie heute.

Lösungen

EXERCISE 1 What did Peter do when he was a child?

Ex. ☺ *play the guitar* / ☹ *sing in the choir*

Peter used to play the guitar. He didn't use to sing in the choir.

- a) **He used to read a lot. He didn't use to watch TV.**
- b) **He used to visit his grandma. He didn't use to travel abroad.**
- c) **He used to build tree houses. He didn't use to go to the beach.**
- d) **He used to walk to school. He didn't use to take the bus.**
- e) **He used to phone his friends. He didn't use to email his friends.**
- f) **He used to live in a small village. He didn't use to live in a big city.**

EXERCISE 2 Complete these sentences using *used to*.

- a) Today Joe always does his homework. But when he was in 5th grade, he *didn't use to do his homework*.
- b) Today Joe always gets good marks. But when he was younger **he didn't use to get good marks**.
- c) Today Joe doesn't copy from his neighbor. But back then **he used to copy from his neighbor**.
- d) Today Joe doesn't throw paper balls at his neighbor. But in 5th grade, he **used to throw paper balls**.

EXERCISE 3 Before he moved to New York, Sam used to live and work on a small farm. Which things did he do there, and which not? Use *used to* / *didn't use to*.

- a) Sam **used to** milk the cows every morning.
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- e) He **used to** drive a tractor.
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EXERCISE 5 *used to*. Fill in "used to" or "didn't use to".

- a) Jane *used to* work as a nurse. Now she's a doctor and has a private practice.
- b) She **used to** work night shifts at the hospital.
- c) She **used to** make the beds for the patients.
- d) She **didn't use to** make as much money as she does now.
- e) She **didn't use to** enjoy her work; she likes being a doctor better than being a nurse.

EXERCISE 6 *used to*. Translate the sentences into English using *used to*.

- a) **Did you use to wash your clothes / do your laundry yourself? – No, my mother used to do it.**
- b) **I never used to do crafts.**
- c) **He never used to help others.**
- d) **She used to work at night.**
- e) **People used to write lots of letters; today they write e-mails.**
- f) **When I was in first grade, I didn't use to have my own desk.**
- g) **Peter didn't use to make as much money as he does today.**