Gerunds after Prepositions

Remember: **verb/adjective + preposition + verb(-ing)**

e.g. *She's good at singing.* *I'm thinking of leaving.*

Exercise 1

Each sentence has ONE mistake. Find it and write the correct sentence on the line.

1. She's really good at to play the piano.

→ _____

2. I'm not very keen on go to the gym in the morning.

→ _____

3. He insisted on paid for everything himself.

→ _____

4. They're interested in buy a bigger flat.

→ _____

5. Are you looking forward to see your family at Christmas?

→ _____

6. My dad is hopeless at to read maps.

→ _____

Exercise 2

Choose the correct preposition to complete each sentence.

1. I'm really keen **on / at / of** cooking Italian food.
2. She's never been very good **on / at / in** learning languages.
3. We're looking forward **at / of / to** starting our holiday.
4. He's thinking **of / on / at** changing his job.
5. Are you interested **in / on / at** joining the photography club?
6. The teacher insisted **at / of / on** everyone handing in their homework.
7. My brother is really **at / into / of** skateboarding.
8. I'm not very fond **of / at / on** getting up early.

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Exercise 3

Rewrite each sentence using the word in bold. Do not change the meaning. Use 2–5 words.

1. Cooking bores me. I don't enjoy it.

   I'm not keen _____ *cooking.*

2. My plan is to travel around Asia next year.

   I'm thinking _____ *Asia next year.*

3. My little sister can't wait to see the new film.

   She's looking forward _____ *the new film.*

4. Tom demanded that we listen to the whole speech.

   Tom insisted _____ *the whole speech.*

5. Maths is really difficult for her.

   She's hopeless _____ *maths.*

Exercise 4

Complete these sentences so they are true for you. Use the -ing form.

1. I'm really good at _____
2. I'm not very keen on _____
3. I'm thinking of _____
4. I'm looking forward to _____
5. I've always been interested in _____
6. I'm hopeless at _____

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used to

1. Form of used to

	Form	Example
+ Positive	subject + **used to** + infinitive	*She used to walk to school.*
– Negative	subject + **didn't use to** + infinitive	*They didn't use to have a car.*
? Question	**Did** + subject + **use to** + infinitive?	*Did you use to play an instrument?*

2. Comparison: used to *vs* past simple

	USED TO	PAST SIMPLE
Meaning	A **repeated habit or state** in the past that is **no longer true** now. *I used to eat a lot of fast food.* (= I don't any more)	A **completed action** at a specific time in the past, OR a single past event. *She visited Paris in 2019.* (= one specific trip)
Time reference	No specific time needed. The focus is on **contrast with the present**.	Often used with **specific time expressions**: *yesterday, last week, in 2010, at 3 pm, ago*
Can both be used?	Yes — **used to** emphasises the habit was regular and has now stopped.	Yes — **past simple** just states the fact without the 'not any more' contrast.
Watch out!	✗ *I use to play tennis.* (present – wrong form) ✗ *I used to go to Paris last year.* (specific time → use past simple)	✗ *I didn't used to like it.* (used to after didn't → wrong) After *did/didn't* → always **use to** (no -d)

3. Typical uses — side by side

Use	used to	past simple
Repeated past habit	*I used to cycle to work every day.*	*I cycled to work every day last summer.*
Past state (no longer true)	*We used to live in a small flat.*	*We lived in a small flat for two years.*
Single completed event	✗ **Not possible** — used to needs a repeated action or state	*She visited Rome in 2022.*
Specific time mentioned	✗ **Avoid** — specific times → past simple	*He called me at 9 o'clock yesterday.*

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For these people, write in an expression with *used to* in order to contrast the present situation with the earlier situation.

0 Eric doesn't smoke nowadays but he used to smoke 40 a day when he was younger.
0 Penny and Sam didn't use to listen to classical music at all but they listen to it all the time now.
1 There _____ some old houses here but, as you can see, now there's a supermarket.
2 Now Joe goes to bed early but he _____ to bed early before he got this job.
3 Zoë has a car now but she _____ one when she was at university.
4 Simon _____ with his brother but now he lives on his own.
5 Carol goes to work by bike now but she _____ by car.
6 Sandra _____ coffee but now she drinks three or four cups a day.

Tick the verb phrases that are correct and rewrite the incorrect ones, using *used to* where possible.

0 The lights went out while I was getting the lunch ready. yesterday. ✓
0 When Jim was younger, he wasn't taking much exercise. didn't use to take
1 Three years ago, Tony used to be in the army. _____
2 Sally made several mistakes because she wasn't concentrating. _____
3 I took my umbrella because I could see that it rained. _____
4 When Jill was young, she was keeping a diary. _____
5 The doctor called to see my mother every day last week. _____
6 I read the text again because I wasn't understanding it very well. _____

Some years ago, Pam and Carl were junior tennis champions. Now they have three young children and don't have much time for tennis. They are being interviewed on television. Write in the correct past form of the verbs in brackets; use *used to* where possible.

TV How did you get [0] (you, get) to know each other?
PAM Well, when I was in my early teens I _____ [1] (play) tennis two or three times a week and when I _____ [2] (not, play), I _____ [3] (watch) matches on TV. One day, while I _____ [4] (watch) a boys' match, I _____ [5] (notice) this handsome young player who _____ [6] (wear) earrings. In those days, in general, boys _____ [7] (not, wear) jewellery, and I _____ [8] (think) it was a bit strange. Anyway, he _____ [9] (win) the match and I _____ [10] (decide) to send him a fan letter.
TV So you _____ [11] (knew) the name of the handsome young player. What _____ [12] (happen) next, Carl?
CARL One day, a letter _____ [13] (arrive) from this fan called Pamela. In those days, I _____ [14] (get) a lot of fan mail, but the letter _____ [15] (have) a photo. The girl _____ [16] (look) very nice and she _____ [17] (hold) a tennis racket.
TV So you _____ [18] (arrange) to meet her.
CARL Yes, but soon we _____ [19] (not, have) to arrange to meet because Pam _____ [20] (start) playing for the young women's team.
TV You both _____ [21] (become) junior champions, but you don't play any longer.
PAM No, we _____ [22] (stop) playing regularly when I _____ [23] (expect) Sally, our first daughter.
TV And do you miss top-class tennis?
CARL Not really. We _____ [24] (love) tennis while we _____ [25] (play) but now we're happy to spend our time with the children.



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