

MASTER YOUR LISTENING SKILL

The good old days



I was born in 1936 and I lived with my family in a village near Bristol. My father was a fruit farm advisor and my mother was a housewife. But when our teacher _____ (retire) from my school, my mother asked for the school books and started a small school at home. I think about nine children _____ (used/would) come to study with us. Mother _____ (teach) us French and English, even though she was very deaf!

Because it was the war, most people _____ (used not/wouldn't) to have much food. We were lucky as we had lots of land so we _____ (used to/would) grow our own vegetables and we had chickens, rabbits and a pig. But mother _____ (used to/would) feed us lentils every day, which I hated! I still can't stand them now. I remember hiding lentils in my pockets – and I'd sow them in the garden. Luckily I didn't ever wait for them to grow! I think that was the beginning

of my gardening career, because after I left home that's what I studied at college! We didn't have a television until I was about ten. Instead, we listened to the radio a lot after school, and we _____ (used to/would) play cards and board games, and play with friends outside. We couldn't really afford many holidays – people didn't in those days. There wasn't much petrol, and it was very expensive. But when I was a bit older we had a caravan and I remember it had a tin bath that hung down under the floorboards. We _____ (used to/would) love bath time on holidays! Nowadays people buy so many clothes, but when I was little people used to make them all. My grandmother _____ (used to/would) cut up old clothes and make skirts and blouses from them. And she _____ (used to/would) give us a homemade jumper every year that she knitted from wool she _____ (take) from old jumpers. These jumpers were lovely – bright and stripy. And when we (make) holes in our socks grandmother _____ (used to/would) always mend them for us.

Mmm ... we didn't have a lot in those days, but I had a very happy childhood