

# used to (do)

**A** Study this example situation:

*a few years ago*

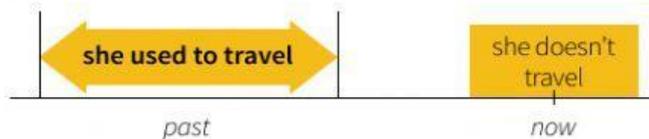


*these days*

Nicola doesn't travel much these days.  
She prefers to stay at home.

But she **used to travel** a lot.  
She **used to go** away two or three times a year.

She **used to travel** a lot = she travelled often in the past, but she doesn't do this any more.



**B** I **used to** do something = I did it often in the past, but not any more:

- I **used to play** tennis a lot, but I don't play very much now.
- David **used to spend** a lot of money on clothes. These days he can't afford it.
- 'Do you go to the cinema much?' 'Not now, but I **used to**.' (= I used to go)

We also use **used to** ... for things that were true, but are not true any more:

- This building is now a furniture shop. It **used to be** a cinema.
- I **used to think** Mark was unfriendly, but now I realise he's a very nice person.
- I've started drinking coffee recently. I never **used to like** it before.
- Lisa **used to have** very long hair when she was a child.

**C** 'I **used to** do something' is past. There is no present. You cannot say 'I use to do'. To talk about the present, we use the present simple (I **do**).

Compare:

<i>past</i>	he <b>used to play</b>	we <b>used to live</b>	there <b>used to be</b>
<i>present</i>	he <b>plays</b>	we <b>live</b>	there <b>is</b>

- We **used to live** in a small village, but now we **live** in a city.
- There **used to be** four cinemas in the town. Now there **is** only one.

**D** The normal question form is **did** (you) **use to** ... ? :

- Did** you **use to eat** a lot of sweets when you were a child? (= did you do this often?)

The negative form is **didn't use to** ... (**used not to** ... is also possible):

- I **didn't use to like** him. (or I **used not to like** him.)

**E** Compare I **used to do** and I **was doing**:

- I **used to watch** TV a lot. (= I watched TV often in the past, but I don't do this any more)
- I **was watching** TV when Rob called. (= I was in the middle of watching TV)

**F** Do not confuse I **used to do** and I **am used to doing** (see Unit 61). The structures and meanings are different:

- I **used to live** alone. (= I lived alone in the past, but I no longer live alone.)
- I **am used to living** alone. (= I live alone, and it's not a problem for me because I've lived alone for some time.)

# Exercises

## 18.1 Complete the sentences with **used to** + a suitable verb.

- Nicola used to travel a lot, but she doesn't go away much these days.
- Sophie \_\_\_\_\_ a motorbike, but last year she sold it and bought a car.
- Our friends moved to Spain a few years ago. They \_\_\_\_\_ in Paris.
- Jackie \_\_\_\_\_ my best friend, but we aren't friends any more.
- I rarely eat ice cream now, but I \_\_\_\_\_ it when I was a child.
- It only takes me about 40 minutes to get to work now that the new road is open. It \_\_\_\_\_ more than an hour.
- There \_\_\_\_\_ a hotel near the airport, but it closed a long time ago.
- I \_\_\_\_\_ in a factory. It wasn't my favourite job.

## 18.2 Complete the sentences. Choose from the box.

- Lisa used to have very long hair when she was a child.
- We \_\_\_\_\_ to watch TV a lot, but we don't have a TV any more.
- Lisa works in a shop now. She \_\_\_\_\_ a receptionist in a hotel.
- What games \_\_\_\_\_ you use to play when you were a child?
- I \_\_\_\_\_ like big cities, but now I prefer the countryside.
- In your last job, how many hours a day did you \_\_\_\_\_ to work?
- I don't travel very much these days, but I used \_\_\_\_\_.
- I used to \_\_\_\_\_ to run ten kilometres, but I can't run that far now.
- These days I eat more than before. I \_\_\_\_\_ use to eat as much.

did  
didn't  
to  
use  
used  
used to  
used to be  
used to have  
be able

## 18.3 Compare what Karen said ten years ago and what she says today:

<p>TEN YEARS AGO</p> <p>I travel a lot.</p> <p>I'm very lazy.</p> <p>I don't like cheese.</p>		<p>I play the piano.</p> <p>I never drink tea.</p> <p>I have a dog.</p>	<p>TODAY</p> <p>I eat lots of cheese now.</p> <p>My dog died two years ago.</p> <p>I work very hard these days.</p>		<p>I haven't played the piano for a long time.</p> <p>I don't go away much these days.</p> <p>Tea's great! I like it now.</p>
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Now write about how Karen has changed. Use **used to** / **didn't use to** / **never used to** in the first part of your sentence.

- She used to travel a lot, but she doesn't go away much these days.
- She used \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_

## 18.4 Write sentences about yourself. Begin **I used to ...** (**I used to be/work/like/play** etc.)

- I used to live in a small village, but now I live in a city.
- I used to play tennis a lot, but I don't play any more.
- I used \_\_\_\_\_, but \_\_\_\_\_
- I \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Now begin with **I didn't use to ...**

- I didn't use to read a lot, but I do now.
- I didn't \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_