GRAMMAR BANK

6A *used to*

REFERENCE

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We use *used to* for talking about past habits and states which are usually no longer true.

As a child, I **used to eat** a lot of sweets.

You can also use the past simple with the same meaning.

As a child, I **ate** a lot of sweets.

+	I/You/He/She/It/We/They	used to live in France.
-		didn't use to see my parents.
?	Did they use to visit?	

We don't use *used to* for things that happened only once, a specific number of times or a specific length of time. We use the past simple for this.

My family **moved** to the USA last year. NOT ~~My family used to move to the USA last year.~~

We **went** to Italy twice on holiday. NOT ~~We used to go to Italy twice on holiday.~~

I **studied** at university for three years. NOT ~~I used to study at university for three years.~~

In spoken English, we often use the negative form *never used to* rather than *didn't use to*.

I **never used to see** my cousins, except in the summer holidays.

In spoken English, we often leave out the verb or phrase after *used to*, especially in short answers.

A: Do you play tennis?

B: No, **I used to**, but I don't anymore.



PRACTICE

1 **Which sentence is correct: a, b, or both? Why?**

1 **a** I used to collect toy animals when I was younger.
b I collected toy animals when I was younger.

2 **a** He sang for us last night.
b He used to sing for us last night.

3 **a** I worked in an art gallery for three years.
b I used to work in an art gallery for three years.

4 **a** She used to be a photographer.
b She was a photographer.

5 **a** He used to start composing songs when he was ten.
b He started composing songs when he was ten.

6 **a** Last March I used to visit some friends in Mexico City.
b Last March I visited some friends in Mexico City.

2 **Complete the text with one word in each gap.**

As a child I never used [1] _____ like art. I was terrible at drawing. I [2] _____ to look at my friends' pictures and think, 'They're more talented than me.' Also, I didn't [3] _____ to like my art teacher. She was very strict. Later, as a teenager, I started playing video games. I [4] _____ to play for five hours a day. When I turned sixteen, I designed my first game. My friends used [5] _____ come to my house to play it. A year later, I sold the game to a big company. They said the details and design were incredible. These days, interviewers often ask me, 'Have you always been artistic? [6] _____ you use to spend a lot of time in art galleries?' I find it funny. I just say, 'No! I did [7] _____ use to go to art galleries at all!'

3 **Complete the sentences with the correct form of *used to* and the verb in brackets.**

1 We _____ (live) close to the train station, but we moved away from there last year.
2 Elena _____ (drink) a lot of coffee, but she does now.
3 I _____ (like) my job, but I love it now.
4 _____ you _____ (have) art lessons when you were young?
5 My parents _____ (watch) a lot of television, but they do now.
6 _____ Akira _____ (draw) well when he was a child?
7 It never _____ (be) so hot in the summers here.
8 I _____ (do) a lot of walking, but I don't have time these days.

LIVEWORKSHEETS