

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 used to (live) close to the train station, but we moved away from there last year.

2 Elena used to (drink) a lot of coffee, but she does now.

3 I used to (like) my job, but I love it now.

4 Did you use to (have) art lessons when you were young?

5 My parents used to (watch) a lot of television, but they do now.

6 Did Akira use to (draw) well when he was a child?

7 It never used to (be) so hot in the summers here.

8 I used to (do) a lot of walking, but I don't have time these days.