

FCE 8.1

In this lesson, we are going to compare the use of “used to” and “would”. We will also look at some collocations as well as phrasal verbs with “get”.

used to vs. would

“Used to” and “would” both express habitual actions in the past. Here are the rules of usage:

- “Used to” is followed by the infinitive and is used for actions which no longer happen. It is used for permanent situations as well as habitual actions.
I used to have a tricycle when I was five years old.
John used to have long hair before he joined the army.
The negative is *didn't used to*, though sometimes *didn't use to* is used.
I didn't used to go abroad for my holidays before I won the lottery.
- “Would” is used for past habitual actions which were repeated. “Would” takes an infinitive without *to*.
I would get up for work at seven, then get the bus at seven-thirty.
- “Get/Be used to doing” means “to get or to be accustomed to”. It can be used with all tenses and is always followed by a gerund (an *-ing* word).

Essentially, we can use *used to* when we use *would*, but we can't always use *would* for *used to*. How do you know when you have to use “used to”? **We don't use *would* for past states or situations, only for past actions. *Would* is more formal than *used to*.** (It is a common structure in narrative writing and it is often tested in the exam.) Look at the following examples.

We can say: *I used to have long hair.*
We can't say: *I would have long hair.*

We can say: *I used to go to town on the bus.*
We can also say: *I would go to town on the bus.*

In the first set, we can't use *would* because the verb *have* shows a state, not an action. In the second set, we can use either *used to* or *would* because the verb is an action.

Read examples a-c and then match them with uses 1- 3.

- a) The three of us **used to have** terrible fights.
 - b) Sometimes we **would go out** and play.
 - c) We **were used to doing** them.
- 1) To talk about something in the past that doesn't happen now. This could be something permanent.
 - 2) To mean “to be/get accustomed to”.
 - 3) To talk about a repeated action in the past which doesn't happen now. Note that the action must be repeated and this form is normally used for narrative.

The *Cambridge Learner Corpus* shows that exam candidates often make mistakes with *used to* and *would*. **Correct the following sentences, if necessary. If the sentence is correct, tick the box.**

- ☐ a) Great Britain would have a large manufacturing industry. _____
- ☐ b) People used to work very long hours in the past. _____
- ☐ c) People are now used to working harder for less money. _____
- ☐ d) It takes a long time to get used to do a new job. _____
- ☐ e) My grandmother was used to work very long hours when she was a girl. _____
- ☐ f) When I worked for the BBC, I would often have to travel abroad. _____
- ☐ g) When I was a child, I use to go to the zoo with my parents. _____

Answer the following situations using *would*, *used to*, *get used to* or *be used to*.

- a) What did you used to do in the holidays when you were a child?
- b) Have you ever had any problems getting used to doing something?
- c) What did you used to do in the past that you don't do now?
- d) What kind of food are you used to eating?

Let's move on to collocations. Choose the correct collocation in a- g.

- a) My father's new car can **have / do** 200 kph.
- b) I don't like people who **break / keep** their promises.
- c) We're **doing / having** a holiday in South Africa this year.
- d) Max **made / took** a fortune from computer software.
- e) The music from the festival **made / kept** me awake for ages last night.
- f) This ice cream **gets / tastes** really good.
- g) Lily **spends / keeps** too much time at her friend's house.

Now, let's practice phrasal verbs with "get". Complete the sentences using the phrases in the box.

the flu	washing the floor	the tennis team
some work	the angry neighbor	not paying

- a) The two boys got away from as quickly as they could.
- b) Susie needs to get down to because she has exams soon.
- c) Tom got out of , which put him in a good mood.
- d) I'm just getting over after being in bed for a week.
- e) He was delighted when he got into at the weekend.
- f) You won't get away with taxes.

Look at a-f again and decide what each phrasal verb means.

Here is one final exercise: word formation. For questions 1-8, read the text below. Use the word given in capitals at the end of some of the lines to form a word that fits in the gap in the same line.

HOW YOUR FRIENDS AND THEIR FRIENDS CAN AFFECT YOUR MOOD

Recent research shows that our moods are more (0) STRONGLY influenced by friends than we tend to think. Not only that, but the moods of friends of friends affect us too – even up to three degrees of (1) Indeed, it is becoming clear that a whole range of things are transmitted through (2) networks of friends in ways that are not entirely understood, from (3) to a (4) for certain types of music or to what you watch on TV.

Your (5) to be happy increases with the number of happy friends you have and if a good friend who lives within a couple of kilometres of you suddenly becomes happy, that increases the chances of you becoming happy by more than 60 per cent.

Psychologists have shown that people (6) copy the facial expressions, manner of speech, body language and general (7) of people around them, often with (8) speed and accuracy, despite being unaware they are doing it. This causes them to actually experience the emotions associated with what they are copying.

STRONG

SEPARATE

SOCIETY

HAPPY

PREFER

ABLE

CONSCIOUS

BEHAVE

REMARK