

1A describing past and present habits

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used to/would

We use *used to* and *would* to talk about past habits. These are repeated past actions and events that took place in the past, but which don't happen now.

We **used to** meet up on Saturdays and cycle into town.
Joe **would** stop by on his way home from work.

We also use *used to* to talk about past states, but NOT *would*.
I **used to** have longer hair.

Notice that we use *get used to* to say that we are becoming familiar with something. We use *be used to* to say we are already familiar with something and it is no longer new to us.

I've **got used to** working the night shift.
I'm **used to** having just six hours' sleep a night.

will

We use *will* to describe present habits.

He'll get up early every morning and go for a run.

When we stress the word *will*, it expresses our annoyance with the habit. We can do the same with *would*.

She **will** go to bed late and then moan about being tired.

Past and present continuous

We can use the past and present continuous to talk about past and present habits. The meaning is usually one of annoyance. We often use these tenses with adverbs of frequency, e.g. *always, often, frequently, constantly*.

They **were constantly competing** against each other.
She's **always calling** me.

tend to/have a tendency to

We use *tend to* (+ infinitive) and *have/have got a tendency to* (+ infinitive) to describe present and past habits.

Jess **tends to** be quite quiet in the mornings.

He's **got a tendency to** stay out quite late in the evenings.

We **had a tendency to** fight about the silliest of things.

keep on/kept on

We use *keep (on)* (+ -ing form) to describe present habits and *kept (on)* (+ -ing form) to describe past habits. These forms often describe annoyance.

You **keep on** calling me by my sister's name!

We **kept on** making the same mistakes over and over again!

Other phrases

We use *be prone to* (+ -ing form) and *be inclined to* (+ infinitive) to describe likely negative past or present behaviour.

I **was prone to** accidents when I was a kid.

He's **inclined to** act now and think later.

We use *As a rule* or *Nine times out of ten* with the past or present simple to describe past or present typical behaviour.

As a rule, I don't socialise much during the week.

Nine times out of ten, we lost our matches.

PRACTICE

1 Complete the sentences with *would* where possible. Use *used to* if not.

- I _____ have lots of friends but not these days.
- When I was young, my aunt _____ bring me a gift every time she visited.
- I _____ live in a flat up the road, but I moved here last year.
- Every day after school, my friends and I _____ cycle to the park.
- Zach _____ be a real party animal, but not now he's got kids.
- My friend Toluwani and I _____ meet up once a week when we lived near each other.

2 Choose the correct words to complete the sentences. Which sentences express annoyance?

- When my parents were out, I 'd / 'll put on some music and dance around the house.
- Erik **will / would** stare at his phone instead of talking to me these days!
- At primary school, I 'd / 'll call my teacher 'mum' by mistake! Embarrassing!
- My friend Jen **will / would** often complain about her job when we're together.
- I 'd / 'll sometimes think of things to get from the supermarket but forget them again two minutes later.
- My parents **will / would** always come into my room without knocking and it drove me mad!

3 Use the prompts to write sentences using either the present continuous or the past continuous.

- Anna / always / forget / my birthday / these days
- One of my friends / always / get / into trouble / when / younger
- I / always / get told off / for talking / when / I / at school
- My little brother / always / steal / my stuff / when / we / kids
- I / always / leave / my phone / in strange places
- My friends and I / always / struggling / think of things to do

4 Match the sentence beginnings (1–6) with the endings (a–f).

- We're all prone
 - I'm inclined
 - I have a tendency to
 - Nine times out of ten,
 - Annoyingly, I keep on
 - My family and I tend not
- dropping my phone and breaking it.
 - to do my homework in the mornings.
 - bite my bottom lip when I'm stressed.
 - I sleep through my alarm.
 - to do my homework in the mornings.
 - to speak much during the week.