

English Grammar – Past and Present Habits

1. Past habits – “used to” + bare infinitive

- When I was young, I used to play football with my dad.
- When I was a child, I used to walk to school.
- When I was at university, I used to smoke.

Note: The verb must be in the “bare infinitive” form.

2. Present habits – “to be used to” + gerund

- I live in Brazil, so I am used to speaking Portuguese.
- We live in London, so we are used to taking the underground trains.
- He is a lawyer, so he is used to working a lot.

Note 1: The verb must be in the “-ing” form (gerund).

Note 2: A synonym is “to be accustomed to”. For example:

I am used to speaking Portuguese. = I am accustomed to speaking Portuguese.

A complete example:

When I started my job, I **used to drink** a lot of filter coffee. (*past habit*)

Then I decided to change to decaffeinated coffee.

Now, I **am used to drinking** decaffeinated coffee. (*present habit*)

Exercise. Complete the sentences using “used to” or “to be used to” and the given verbs:

1. Before, I thought that Maria was irritating, but now I _____ with her. (*work*)
2. When we were at university, we _____ wine every night! (*drink*)
3. I can understand her because I _____ French. (*speak*)
4. At first I didn't like the hours of work, but now I _____ them. (*do*)
5. It _____ elegant to smoke, but nowadays, it's offensive. (*be*)
6. Running is hard for me because I _____ exercise. (*not / do*)
7. We _____ to work at the same time. (*go*) (*past habit*)
8. We _____ to work at the same time. (*go*) (*present habit*)