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Lesson 5

Past Habits

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Learn English Differently

Grammar Explorer

Used to/ had to/ was-were able to.

Function

Expressing past habits

Part One

Read the following short text:



I got my first job when I was 12 years old. I worked as a paperboy delivering newspapers to people in my village every morning. I used to get up very early and deliver the papers to half of the village while my friend Ben would deliver to the other half. I used to love seeing the empty streets of the village before anyone got up but I used to hate the job on rainy days. I would sometimes ride my bike to get the job done faster. Ben was luckier than me, sometimes if he couldn't be bothered to do his paper round, his Dad would drive him around his route in his car.

- ✓ Underline the uses of "**used to**" and "**would**".
- ✓ Why do you think you should use "used to" and "would"?
- ✓ Do you think there is a difference between them?
- ✓ Does the text describe past habits or speak about present habits?
- ✓ Can you describe your past habits?

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Examples

- I **used to** get up very early.
- I **used to** love seeing the empty streets.
- I **used to** hate the job on rainy days.
- Ben **would** deliver to the other half.
- I **would** sometimes ride my bike.

Rule:

"**used to**" can be used to describe past habits, likes, dislikes and opinions that are not true now.

E.g. I **used to** like oranges, but now I prefer apples! (In the past, oranges were your favorite fruit, now you prefer apples).

"**would**" can only be used to describe past habitual/ repeated actions NOT situations and opinions.

E.g. On Saturdays, I would go the library to read books.

Notice: You can replace "would" by "used to" but NEVER the opposite!

E.g. On Saturdays, I would go the library to read books.

I used to study all weekdays. On Saturdays, I would/ used to go the library to read books.

(Going to the library is a repeated action in the past).

Remember:

'used to'/'would' + verb (infinitive).

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