

# Habit: *used to, would, will*

## A Starting activities

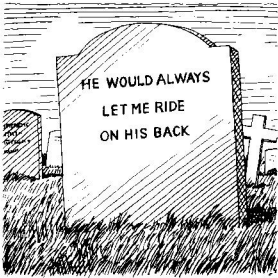
### 1 What a good child

*used to* for repeated or regular actions in the past

- 1 Work in pairs. Persuade your partner that you were a model, perfect child. Use imaginary or real memories from your childhood which show how perfect you were. Say sentences with *used to*, like this: *When I was a child I used to help my parents clean the house every day.*
- 2 Work as a class. Say your sentences to the class. Who was the most perfect child in the class?

### 2 Epitaphs for animals

*would* for repeated or regular actions in the past



- 1 Work with a partner. An epitaph is written on the gravestone of someone who has died. Imagine that you are writing an epitaph for an animal that you had as a pet, or that lived on a farm near you. Use the list of verbs below to help you. Choose three animals. Write sentences saying what each animal would always do when it was alive, like this: *He would always let me ride on his back.*  
**Animals:** horse, donkey, dog, cat, bird, cow, sheep, chicken  
**Verbs:** sing, lay (eggs), give, play, follow, obey, bark, purr, stroke, tarry, sleep, chase

- 2 Read some of your epitaphs to the class. Write down the most moving, interesting or funny epitaphs you hear.

### 3 Why are these wrong?

*used to, would and will*

Work as a class. Which of the *information sentences* (a–e) tells you why each of the *wrong sentences* (1, 2 and 3) is wrong?

#### Wrong sentences

- 1 ~~When I was a young man I would have a moustache.~~
- 2 ~~Maria used to learn English for five years.~~
- 3 ~~She'll keep bringing friends home to dinner without telling me in advance.~~

#### Information sentences

- a Don't use *used to* to talk about the total number of times something happened.
- b Don't use *used to* to talk about how long something went on for.
- c Don't use *would* for past states or situations (only past actions).
- d Use *would* stressed to criticize typical action or behaviour in the past.
- e We cannot use the short form of *will* to suggest criticism, because *will* must be stressed.

When you have finished, look at Activity note 19 on page 141.

## B Grammar guide

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- 1 **used to**
- *Used to* only exists in the simple past tense. Ask questions with *Did you use to . . . ?* The negative is *I did not use to . . .* or *I never used to . . .*
  - Use *used to* to talk about:
    - a repeated or regular actions in the past which do not happen now:  
*When I was twelve I used to go to the cinema every week.*  
NOTE This use of *used to* is useful for contrasting the past generally with the present generally, especially when talking about attitudes and behaviour.  
*People didn't use to put their relatives in old people's homes but they do now.*
    - b past states which are not true now:  
*I used to have black hair but it's gone grey now.*
    - c past situations which are not the situation now:  
*He used to be Mary's boyfriend but now he's Rachel's.*
  - Don't use *used to*:
    - a a second time after *and* (or *when, while*):  
*I used to go to the cinema every week and sit in the front row.* (NOT *used to sit*)
    - b to talk about how long something went on for (use the past simple):  
*I went to that school for five years.* (NOT *used to go*)
    - c to talk about the number of times something happened (use the past simple):  
*We went there on holiday five times.* (NOT *used to go*)
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- 2 **would**
- *Would* is followed by the infinitive without *to*. It can be contracted to *I'd, you'd, she'd* and so on. The negative is *I would not* or *I would never*.
  - *Would* is often more formal than *used to*. Use *would to*:
    - a talk about repeated or regular actions in the past which do not happen now (the same use as *used to*):  
*In his youth he would go to the cinema every week.*  
NOTE As with *used to*, this use of *would* is useful for contrasting the past generally with the present generally.  
*In the old days people would help you if you were in trouble, but they won't now.*
    - b make criticisms of somebody's behaviour:  
*She would leave my umbrella on the bus.*  
In this use, *would* is stressed. It can be used for a single action, but one that is typical of somebody.
  - We don't use *would* for past states or situations (only for past actions). So you can say *I used to have black hair* but you cannot say *I would have black hair*.
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- 3 **will**
- *Will* + infinitive without *to* is used for a person's typical behaviour now.  
*He'll watch television for hours in the evening.*
  - As with *would*, if you stress *will* it suggests criticism. *Will* + infinitive without *to* is used for repeated action, suggesting criticism.  
*He will forget to lock the door when he goes out.*  
The short forms *I'll, he'll*, etc. are not possible here because *will* must be stressed.

# C Activities

## 1 Older and wiser

*used to, didn't use to*

- 1 Work alone. Write *used to* and *didn't use to* sentences for every year of your life between the ages of six and sixteen, like this: *When I was fifteen I used to eat a lot more than I do now. When I was sixteen I didn't use to fall in love as easily as I do now.*
- 2 Work in pairs. Compare your sentences with the person next to you.

## 2 He used to make me do too much work

*used to and would*

- 1 Work alone. A newspaper phones you for information about someone from your past. Choose someone you used to know well but who you do not see any more. It could be someone you liked or a person you disliked. Prepare enough information to speak for three or four minutes over the phone. Use as many *used to* and *would* sentences as you realistically can. Example:  
*Mr Jones was my English teacher at school. He used to make me angry. He would always make me do more work than I wanted to do.*
- 2 Work in pairs, groups or as a class. Give your information about the person you used to know well as if you were speaking on the phone. Speak for three or four minutes.

## 3 He will make films about aliens

*will and would for criticism*

- 1 Work as a class. Say sentences critical of the behaviour of the people below. Use *will* for present behaviour and *would* for past behaviour. Stress *will* and *would*, like this: *He will make films about aliens all the time. He would move his hips while he was singing.*  
**People:** Stephen Spielberg, Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson, Pablo Picasso.

- 2 Work in pairs or groups. Think of more *will* (present behaviour) and *would* (past behaviour) sentences for people you think the whole class will know or know of. You will need your sentences for 3.
- 3 Work as a class. Say your *will* or *would* sentences to the class for them to guess who the sentences are about. Guess who other people's sentences are about.

## 4 The good old days?

*used to, would and will in past/present contrasts*

Work as a class. Discuss how the world has changed since your grandparents' time. Contrast that past time with the way we live today, like this: *People used to stop and help if your car broke down, but they won't help you today. In the past a man would give up his seat to a woman on a bus or a train. Young men today won't do that.*

Has the world got better or worse? Discuss transport, behaviour with strangers, neighbours, writing letters, local shops and supermarkets, boyfriends and girlfriends, comfort, machines, travel and health.



## D Accuracy practice

**1** WHERE POSSIBLE, rewrite these sentences using *would* instead of the first verb in the past simple.

- 1 I went to Tokyo last year.
- 2 He met her every time she came to Madrid.
- 3 I went swimming twice a day when we lived on the coast.
- 4 She wrote to me for three years and then stopped.
- 5 Richard asked Laura three times if she wanted to come.
- 6 When she lived at home, Laura borrowed her parents' car to drive into town.
- 7 We left our cat with the neighbours when we went on holiday.

**2** Complete the sentences using *used to* (positive, negative, or question).

- 1 \_\_\_\_ (you) play with your brother's toys when you were young?
- 2 I never \_\_\_\_ eat so much in the evenings!
- 3 I \_\_\_\_ (not) go out much until I was twenty.
- 4 Sarah \_\_\_\_ (not) be as clever as Ray but she is now.
- 5 I can remember, darling, how we \_\_\_\_ walk home holding hands.
- 6 There \_\_\_\_ be a hotel where the Town Hall is now.
- 7 \_\_\_\_ (you) play football when you were at school?
- 8 Who \_\_\_\_ be the first to help when someone was in trouble?

**3** These sentences are wrong. Correct them.

- 1 ~~Last week I used to go to London.~~
- 2 ~~I often used to see Peter when we used to be in the same football team.~~
- 3 ~~Sheila used to write to me for six months.~~
- 4 ~~When I was young I would have only three smart shirts.~~
- 5 ~~He'll eat with his mouth open, which is very irritating.~~

**4** Change any past tense verbs that can be changed to *used to* or *would* + infinitive. Change present tense verbs that can be changed to *will* + infinitive.

Doyle had a hard childhood because Glasgow (1) *was* a hard city. He (2) *got up* every day while it (3) *was* still dark. His day (4) *began* with stealing milk from outside people's front doors and sometimes he (5) *stole* newspapers too. He (6) *threw* them all over the wet streets just as the sun was rising over the tops of the factories. He (7) *was* a bad boy, as he (8) *tells* journalists and anybody else who will listen to him, sitting at his regular table at his favourite bar in the centre of the city. He (9) *tells* you his stories every evening. He has stories about how he (10) *drove* to the coast in stolen cars, how he (11) *got into* fights, and how one day the police (12) *arrested* him and (13) *put* him in prison. And, of course, he (14) *tells* you the well-known story of how he (15) *learned* to paint in prison.