

When to use - used to and would

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‘Used to’ and ‘would’ are both used to describe repeated actions that occurred in the past. They both explain past situations and are mostly used interchangeably. However, there is a fine difference between the two. Let us know them in detail and learn their proper usage.

"Used to" & "Would"

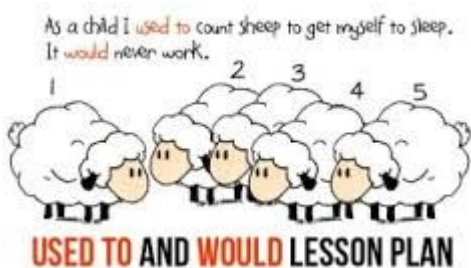
Used to describe past habits and states in contrast with the present.

Used to

Used to – It is used to convey an action that was a past habit and it has occurred at an earlier stage of life but not now. It mainly focuses on the habit. It shows that there was repetition in the past but it has stopped now. Used to can refer to the past facts or generalizations that are no longer true.

Examples:

- We used to go swimming every summer.
- Tony used to live in London.
- Kaushik used to have a stressful job.
- We used to go to cinema after lectures.



Would

Would describes that an action was routine, typical behavior that was frequently repeated. It focuses on frequency. It can also suggest an extreme habit. Would is more often used when it has been established that the action took place in the past.

Example:

- She used to play basketball every Friday, when she was at school.
- Now replace, used to with would
- She would play basketball every Friday, when she was at school.

The second sentence sounds grammatically incorrect. But if we establish the past time frame before would

appears, then the sentence will sound fine.

When she was at school, she would play basketball every Friday.

Let us look at some more examples.

- Guys those days would smoke, and act cool.
- Sarah would always forget her homework, until the teacher threatened to punish her.

With the above examples, you can not only understand the difference but also the correct usage. Take a test and check how well you have understood it.

1. A. In the first job I had, I used to really get on with my senior.
B. In my first job I would really get on with my senior.
2. A. I was surprised to see Yogi drink. He never used to drink before.
B. I was surprised to see Yogi drink. He would never drink before.
3. A. Shilpa used to be shy when she was young but she seems to have changed now.
B. Shilpa would always be shy when she was young but she seems to have changed now.
4. A. I used to be able to communicate in Kannada but I've forgotten it all.
B. I would be able to communicate in Kannada but I've forgotten it all.

Answers: 1. A 2. A 3. A 4. A

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-By Shailja Varma

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