Past habits: would, used to

In English, past habits are actions or behaviors that occurred regularly or repeatedly in the past. Two common ways to express past habits are by using **"would"** and **"used to."** These expressions have similar meanings but are used slightly differently. Here's a detailed explanation of both:

Used to: To express past habits using "used to," you use "used to" plus the infinitive form of the verb.

Structure: Subject + "used to" + infinitive form of the verb

Examples:

- She used to live in New York.
- They used to go swimming every Sunday.
- I used to play the piano when I was younger.

Usage:

- "Used to" is used to describe actions, **habits**, or **situations that were regular or habitual in the past but have stopped in the present**. It indicates that the action or habit no longer continues.
- It is often used to talk about things that happened in the more distant past.

Negative and question Forms:

- She **didn't use to** smoke.
- **Did she use to** live here?

Would: To express past habits using "would," you use "would" plus the infinitive form of the verb.

Structure: Subject + "would" + infinitive form of the verb

Examples:

- He **would** visit his grandparents every summer.
- She **would** always arrive early for meetings.
- We **would** go hiking in the mountains as a family.

Usage:

- "Would" is used to describe **past habits or actions that were routine or habitual in the past.** It is often used for shorter-term habits.
- It is commonly used when telling stories or anecdotes about the past.
- "Would" can also be used to describe a specific action that occurred repeatedly in the past.

Negative and question Forms:

- He **wouldn't** eat vegetables as a child.
- **Would she** always sing in the choir?



Key Differences:

- **"Used to"** is generally used for more long-term, continuous habits or situations in the past, while **"would"** is more commonly used for shorter-term or repeated actions.
- **"Used to"** is often used when discussing a change from the past to the present (e.g., "I used to smoke, but I quit."), whereas **"would"** is used to describe past habits without necessarily implying a change.
- **"Would"** is more common in storytelling and anecdotes.
- Both forms can be used with all subjects and in both negative and question sentences.
- **“Used to”** can be sued to describe past states and habits, whereas **“would”** cannot be used to describe past states.

Past habits: would, used to exercise 1:

Choose the correct answer

1. Which of the following describes a past habit?
a) I will go for a run every morning.
b) I go for a run every morning.
c) I used to go for a run every morning.

2. What is the negative form of "used to" for past habits?
a) used not to
b) didn't use to
c) didn't used to

3. She _____ be a dancer, but she stopped a few years ago.
a) would
b) is
c) used to

4. Which sentence correctly uses "would" to describe a past habit?
a) I am would go for a walk every evening.
b) He would traveled to Europe last summer.
c) She would visit her grandparents on Sundays.

5. What is the question tag for the statement "They would visit the zoo"?
a) They would visit the zoo, do they?
b) They would visit the zoo, wouldn't they?
c) They would visit the zoo, did they?

6. He _____ always be late for school when he was a student.
a) would
b) used to be
c) will

7. Which sentence correctly uses "would" to describe a past habit?
a) They would be play football every weekend.
b) I would go swimming last summer.
c) She would cook dinner every night.

8. Which sentence correctly uses "used to" to describe a past habit?
a) They went skiing every winter.
b) He used to driving a sports car.
c) We used to live in a big house.

9. What is the correct form for the negative question of "He would swim in the ocean"?
a) Would he not swim in the ocean?
b) He would not swim in the ocean?
c) Did he not swim in the ocean?

10. Which sentence correctly uses "would" to describe a past habit?
a) She is swimming in the pool.
b) They would goes to the gym.
c) I would read books every evening.

Past habits: would, used to exercise 2:

Complete the sentences/questions with the correct form of 'used to' and/or 'would'. They can both be used in some cases.

1. She _____ live in the countryside when she was a child.

2. They _____ always have a big family dinner on Sundays.

3. He _____ be a competitive swimmer, but he retired from swimming.

4. Every morning, she _____ walk her dog in the park.

5. _____ you play with action figures when you were a child?

6. We _____ always eat together as a family.

7. He _____ be a heavy smoker, but he quit last year.

8. We _____ always have a bonfire at the beach on New Year's Eve.

9. He _____ to be an avid reader in his youth.

10. He _____ ride his skateboard in the park.



Past habits: would and used to: answer key

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Where two or more answers are given, any of them is correct.

Exercise 1

1. c) I used to go for a run every morning.
2. b) didn't use to
3. c) used to
4. c) She would visit her grandparents on Sundays.
5. b) They would visit the zoo, wouldn't they?
6. a) would
7. c) She would cook dinner every night.
8. c) We used to live in a big house.
9. a) Would he not swim in the ocean?
10. c) I would read books every evening.

Exercise 2

1. used to
2. used to / would
3. used to
4. used to / would
5. Would
6. used to / would
7. used to
8. used to / would
9. used
10. used to / would