

7.1 Used to and would for past habits and states

We can use both *used to* and *would* to talk about situations that existed in the past but do not exist now.

GR7.1)))

- 1 I **used to like** listening to my grandmother reading me stories when I was a child.
- 2 **Did** people ever **use to think** the Earth was flat?
- 3 Leo **didn't use to like** cooking, but now he's really into it.
- 4 In the past children **would learn** everything by heart, but nowadays people rarely do that.
- 5 My grandfather **would tell** me the names of all the trees and flowers when we went for walks in the countryside.

Used to

We use *used to* + infinitive for both past habits and past states: things that were true but are not now.

We used to live in Madrid. (but now we don't)

There used to be an office block here. (but now there isn't)

I used to drive to work. (but now I don't)

I didn't use to like my job. (but now I do)

Note that there is no final 'd' in negatives and questions.

I didn't use to drink tea. *Did you use to work for the UN?*

NOT ~~*I didn't used to drink tea.*~~ ~~*Did you used to work for the UN?*~~

Remember that *used to* is only for past habits. For present habits we use the present simple.
Oliver cycles to work.

Would

We can also use *would* + infinitive to talk about past habits and typical past behaviour.

I would usually drive to work.

I would usually get to work at about 7.30 and I generally wouldn't leave until after six o'clock.

However, we do not use *would* to talk about past states, only actions and typical behaviour.

~~*We would live in London.*~~

~~*There would be an office block here.*~~

- 1 If possible, rewrite these sentences with *would*. If this is not possible, put a cross.
 - 1 I used to hate job interviews, but now I like them. ✗
 - 2 My grandfather used to wear a suit and tie every day.
My grandfather would wear a suit and tie every day.
 - 3 The boss used to arrange a party every year.

 - 4 I used to like visiting my mum's office.

 - 5 Anna used to sit at her desk and write all day.

 - 6 In the past, a lot of people used to do the same job all their life.

 - 7 People used to be more formal at work.

 - 8 I used to see the park from my window, but now I'm in a different office.

- 2 Complete the text using *would* or *used to* and the verbs in brackets. Use *would* where possible; only *used to* if *would* is not possible.

Office life – it's so much better now

It's a good time to be an office worker.

Technology has made the biggest change. Communication is easier and work is more interesting. In the past, people ¹ *would spend* (spend) ages at work doing boring jobs; these days computers can do these same jobs quickly and easily. Attitudes to men and women at work have changed a lot over the last fifty years, too. 'In the 1960s, my boss was a woman who was the same age as me,' says David Harper. 'When we went to meetings together, people ² _____ (be) surprised that she was the boss, not me. I ³ _____ (tell) people how good she was.'

Offices have become more pleasant places to work in. Companies ⁴ _____ (have) strict rules about clothes and behaviour in the office, but these days things are more easy-going. Relationships are more equal now. People ⁵ _____ (speak) to their manager very formally, but now conversations can be more relaxed; and offices themselves are nicer places to work in. 'The office where I worked was small and it ⁶ _____ (smell) really bad,' one of my friends told me. 'Every morning I ⁷ _____ (open) the window as wide as I could, but it never helped!'

Perhaps not everything is better, though. These days, people often stay at work late and take their work home with them. It wasn't always like that. 'When I worked in an office, we ⁸ _____ (start) work at 9.00 and we ⁹ _____ (go) home at 5.30,' said my uncle. 'The manager ¹⁰ _____ (tell) us all to go home at 5.30 and we didn't think about work until the next day!'

7.2 Questions

GR7.2))

- 1 What **does she** think of your new car?
- 2 Where **did he** use to work?
- 3 Who **opened** the box of chocolates?
- 4 Can you tell me **where the railway station is**?
- 5 Would you mind telling me **if the hotel dining room is open** after 10 p.m.?

Object and subject questions

There are two basic types of question: object questions and subject questions.

- In object questions, the question word is the object. We normally put an auxiliary verb before the subject. For the present and past simple tenses, we use the auxiliary *do/does/did*.

*Who **do you** most admire? – I most admire my parents.*

*What **did she** buy? – She bought some books.*

- In subject questions, the question word is the subject. We don't use *do/does/did*.

*Who **inspired** you to become an athlete? – My sports teacher inspired me to become an athlete.*

*Who **invented** the computer? – Several people helped invent it.*

NOT *Who ~~did invent~~ the computer?*

Indirect questions

We use indirect questions to make questions softer or more polite.

- Indirect questions begin with a question phrase (e.g. *Could you tell me ...; I'd like to know ...; Would you mind telling me ...*).
- After the question phrase, the word order is like a statement rather than a question: we do not invert the auxiliary verb and the subject and we do not use *do/does/did*.

*Could you tell me **who you most** admire?*

NOT *Could you tell me ~~who do you most~~ admire?*

*I'd like to know **why you decided** to leave university.*

- We use *if* (in place of a question word) for indirect questions where the answer is *yes* or *no*.

*I'd like to know **if** you have any further ambitions.*

- 1 Read the text and then write the questions. There are both object and subject questions.

William James Sidis was a child genius, born in the US in 1898. After his death, his sister claimed he was the most intelligent person who ever lived, with an IQ between 250 and 300. He could read at eighteen months. He had written four books and was fluent in eight languages before he was ten. Harvard University accepted him as a student when he was just twelve. After he graduated at sixteen, he joined Rice University as a maths professor. However, the students at Rice didn't take him seriously because of his age and he left after only eight months. He went back to Harvard to study law. While he was studying law he became concerned with social issues, and in 1919 he was arrested while he was taking part in a political parade that turned violent. He spent eighteen months in jail. After his release from prison, he hid away and started writing books on subjects such as the universe, American history and psychology. William James Sidis died in 1944.

- 1 *When was James Sidis born?* In 1898.
- 2 _____? His sister.
- 3 _____? Between 250 and 300.
- 4 _____? Harvard University.
- 5 _____? He was arrested.
- 6 _____? Eighteen months.
- 7 _____? In 1944.

- 2 Urban free-climber Claudette Dubois has climbed up the outside of some of the tallest structures in the world, including the Eiffel Tower, Sydney Opera House and the Petronas Twin Towers. Rewrite the direct questions in this interview with Claudette as indirect questions. Begin with the words given.

- 1 How do you feel before you do a big climb?
Could you tell me how you feel before you do a big climb?
- 2 When were you last truly scared?
Would you _____
- 3 What did you want to be when you were growing up?
I'd like _____
- 4 Is there anyone famous you'd like to meet?
Could _____
- 5 How would you like to be remembered?
I'd like _____

- 3 Match the questions in exercise 2 to answers a–e.

- a Just before my last climb. I always get scared.
- b I feel very nervous, but quite calm at the same time.
- c As a funny and disciplined person who liked to challenge herself.
- d Yes, Philippe Petit. I've always admired him.
- e A Hollywood stuntwoman.