

Activity Type

Grammar Game:
guessing, forming
sentences, freer practice
(pair work)

Focus

Used to vs. would

Aim

To practice using 'used to' to describe past states and actions and 'would' to describe repeated past actions.

Preparation

Make one copy of the cards for each pair and cut as indicated.

Level

Intermediate (B1)

Time

25 minutes

Introduction

In this 'used to' vs. 'would' game, students guess typical past routine actions with 'would' based on past experiences described with 'used to'.

Procedure

Begin by explaining to students that 'used to' can describe both states and actions in the past, while 'would' describes repeated actions only and cannot be used with states.

Example: I used to be a waiter.

I would clean tables.
I would talk to customers.
I would take orders.

Next, divide the students into pairs.

Give each pair a set of cards.

Students will also need a pen and some paper to keep score.

Ask students to shuffle the cards and place them face down in a pile on the desk.

Tell the students that they are going to play a game where they use 'would' to guess three typical routine actions connected to a 'used to' statement their partner reads from a card.

To begin, one student picks up a card from the top of the pile and reads out the 'used to' sentence on the card to their partner, e.g. 'I used to have a dog.'

Their partner then has 60 seconds to guess three typical routine actions connected to the sentence using 'would', e.g. 'You would take the dog for a walk.'

For each 'would' sentence that matches one of the actions on the card or is a reasonable synonym, the guesser scores one point.

The guessing student continues to form 'would' sentences until they correctly guess all three routine actions or the time runs out.

Afterwards, the student with the card reveals any actions that were not guessed, and the card is removed from the game.

The other student then picks up the next card, and so on.

The game continues until all the cards have been used.

The student with the most points at the end of the game wins.

I used to have a dog.	I used to take the bus to school.	I used to sing in a choir.	I used to play football.
take the dog for a walk	wait at the bus stop every day	go to choir practice every week	practice with my team every week
buy dog food and treats	pay the bus fare	practice my parts at home	wear my football boots and kit
feed the dog every morning	get off at my school	learn new songs for each performance	watch matches on TV
I used to help with housework.	I used to live near the coast.	I used to love reading.	I used to work in a shop.
clean the floors every week	eat fresh seafood regularly	read for hours without stopping	stack the shelves
take out the rubbish	watch boats and ships go by	always have a book with me	help customers find what they needed
tidy my bedroom	go to the beach on weekends	read before bed every night	use the cash register
I used to ride my bike everywhere.	I used to be a babysitter.	I used to exercise at the gym.	I used to study abroad.
go on rides with friends	play games with the kids	go several times a week	go to lectures and seminars
put on a helmet before a ride	make sure they went to bed on time	warm up before training	make friends from other countries
lock my bike carefully	prepare snacks and meals for them	lift weights to build strength	miss my family and friends
I used to help my parents cook.	I used to go camping as a child.	I used to listen to music all the time.	I used to stay up late at night.
follow the recipe	pack my backpack the night before	discover new artists	feel tired the next morning
taste the food while cooking	sit by the fire and tell stories	make playlists for different moods	watch TV in my bedroom
wash the dishes afterwards	sleep in a tent under the stars	share favourite songs with friends	get told off by my parents