

Unit 25

Used to (I used to do)

a Study this example situation:

		<p>This is Dennis. He gave up smoking years ago. He no longer smokes.</p> <p>But he used to smoke. He used to smoke 40 cigarettes a day.</p> <p>He used to smoke means that he smoked regularly for some time in the past, but he doesn't smoke now:</p>
a few years ago	today	



We use **used to** with the *infinitive* (**used to do** / **used to smoke** etc.) to say that something regularly happened in the past but no longer happens:

- I **used to play** tennis a lot, but now I'm too lazy.
- 'Do you go to the cinema very often?' 'Not now, but I **used to**.'
- Tom **used to travel** a lot. These days he doesn't go away very often.

We also use **used to** for past situations (which no longer exist):

- We **used to live** in a small village but now we live in London.
- This building is a furniture shop. It **used to be** a cinema.
- Do you see that hill over there? There **used to be** a castle on that hill.
- I've started drinking coffee recently. I never **used to like** it before.
- Ann **used to have** long hair but she cut it some time ago.

b **Used to** + infinitive is always past. There is no present. You cannot say 'I use to do'. For the present, use the present simple (I **do**). Compare the present and past:

<i>past</i>	he used to smoke	we used to live	there used to be
<i>present</i>	he smokes	we live	there is

c The normal question form is **did ... use to ...?**:

- **Did you use to eat** a lot of sweets when you were a child?

The negative form is **didn't use to ...** (or 'used not to')

- Jack **didn't use to go** out very often until he met Jill.

d Be careful not to confuse **I used to do** and **I am used to doing** (see Unit 62). The structures and meanings are different:

- I **used to live** alone. (= I lived alone but I no longer live alone.)
- I **am used to living** alone. (= I live alone and don't find it strange or new because I've been living alone for some time.)

hill.

- I've started drinking coffee recently. I never **used to like** it before.