

Unit 62

Be/get used to something (I'm used to ...)

a Study this example situation:



Jane is American but she has lived in Britain for three years. When she first drove a car in Britain, she found it very difficult because she had to drive on the left instead of on the right. Driving on the left was strange and difficult for her because:

She **wasn't used to it**.
She **wasn't used to driving on the left**.

But after a lot of practice, driving on the left became less strange:

- She **got used to driving on the left**.

Now after three years, driving on the left is no problem for her:

- She **is used to driving on the left**.

I'm used to something = it is not new or strange for me:

- Frank lives alone. He doesn't mind this because he has lived alone for 15 years. So he **is used to it**. He **is used to living alone**.
- My new shoes felt a bit strange at first because I **wasn't used to them**.
- Our new flat is on a very busy street. I expect we'll **get used to the noise** but at the moment we find it very disturbing.
- Fred has a new job. He has to get up much earlier - at 6.30. He finds this difficult at present because he **isn't used to getting up so early**.

b Notice that we say 'She **is used to driving** on the left.' (not 'she is used to drive'). **To** in **be/get used to** is a *preposition*, not a part of the infinitive (see also **Unit 59e**). So we say:

- Frank **is used to living** alone. (not 'is used to live')
- Jane had to get used **to driving** on the left. (not 'get used to drive')

c Do not confuse **I am used to doing** (**be/get used to**) with **I used to do**. They are different in structure and in meaning.

I am used to (doing) something = something isn't strange for me:

- I **am used to the weather** in this country.
- I **am used to driving** on the left because I've lived in Britain a long time.

I used to do something means only that I did something regularly in the *past* (see **Unit 25**). You can't use this structure for the *present*. The structure is 'I **used to do**' (not 'I **am used to do**'):

- These days I usually stay in bed until late. But **when I had a job, I used to get up early**.