

## UNIT 25      Used to (I used to do)

a) Study this example situation:

This is Dennis. He gave up smoking two years ago. He no longer smokes.

But he **used to smoke**. He **used to smoke** 40 cigarettes a day.

He **used to smoke** means that he smoked regularly for some time in the past, but he doesn't smoke now:

past ————— now

2 years ago

← he used to smoke →

he doesn't smoke now

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 now 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 <b>used to smoke</b> | we <b>used to live</b> | there <b>used to be</b> |
| <i>present</i> | he <b>smokes</b>        | we <b>live</b>         | there <b>is</b>         |

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.)