



Grammar Talks 4-03 Used to

Life Way Back When

Two people discuss how life was much different before.

Todd: Rachael, we're talking about how life _____ different for us, when we were kids.

Rachael: Yes.

Todd: And, I was thinking the other day, it's interesting because we all have loving grandparents, or parents, _____ parents used to do things that they can't do anymore. For example, we used to ride in _____ my grandfather's pickup truck ...

Rachael: Yes.

Todd: On the highway, which now is totally illegal, like it's a big no-no. We would get in the back of his truck and he would drive us _____ the place in this old pickup truck. And like today, that's against the law, right?

Rachael: We _____ have a station wagon. There are six kids in our family. We just all _____ the back of the station wagon. No seat belts, no car seats.

Todd: Right.

Rachael: Babies were in a little Moses basket on the back seat.

Todd: Yeah. And people _____ things like, also like you said, let kids run around the back of the station wagon or move around. You would strap things _____ car and drive down the street. Sometimes you can't do that anymore, or you have to do it ... It's a little, bit more regulated _____ I think, right?

Rachael: Yeah.

Todd: Yeah. We also _____ burn our trash, which is now a big no-no in California.

Rachael: Really.

Todd: Yeah.

Rachael: We never used _____.

Todd: Really?

Rachael: I can't comment _____.

Todd: Yeah. We had these big barrels. We would burn the trash. If you watch movies, you'll see in America, people burning stuff in barrels to stay warm or whatever.

Rachael: Yes. I've seen that in movies.

Todd: Yeah. I remember one year, my grandfather was like, "We can't do it anymore. They sent a letter. They said no more."

Rachael: We used to go to the dump every week. My father would load up the trailer, well maybe every month or so.



Quiz

- 1) The used to ride on the back of _____.
 - a) their parents
 - b) animals
 - c) a vehicle
- 2) Todd says they used to _____ their trash.
 - a) bury
 - b) burn
 - c) sell
- 3) She used to go to the _____.
 - a) dump
 - b) dock
 - c) dairy
- 4) They used to have commercials about _____.
 - a) driving safe
 - b) smoking cigarettes
 - c) burning trash
- 5) They used to store food in _____.
 - a) cans
 - b) jars
 - c) boxes

Grammar Challenge

Fill in the blanks with the correct word.

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| on that one | piled into | used to do | than before |
| used to | to your | to do that | all over |
| but our | used to burn | used to be | the back of |

Speaking Challenge

Match the answers with the questions.

- 1) What foods did you used to eat?
- 2) What sports did you used to play?
- 3) What shows did you used to watch?
- 4) What clothes did you used to wear?
- 5) What skills did you used to have?

- () I used to watch Star Trek every day.
 () I used to be really good at painting.
 () I used to wear really tight shirts.
 () I used to play golf, but not anymore.
 () I used to eat a lot of fast food, but not now.

What about you? Share your answers to the questions.

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Todd: Yeah.

Rachael: That's how we used to do it. We didn't used to burn it.

Todd: Right.

Rachael: I think they already had laws about it.

Todd: Really? You were probably ahead of the times. Yeah. Yeah, very green place. Also, for having children, women used to drink a little, bit, or they used to smoke when they were pregnant, right?

Rachael: Yes. That was a big thing, especially yeah, smoking to stay slim, while you were pregnant, so you wouldn't get too fat.

Todd: Really?

Rachael: That was why a lot of women smoked.

Todd: Really.

Rachael: It was a diet thing.

Todd: Oh my gosh. I did not know that. Wow, different times huh.

Rachael: Yeah and the baby was born smaller, but that wasn't considered necessarily a problem.

Todd: Wow. Not only that, they used to have commercials about cigarettes. They would have commercials about drinking. I guess they still have commercials about alcohol. Yeah, they used to have commercials about smoking. I think that's illegal in the states now.

Rachael: It's illegal in New Zealand too. Yeah. Haven't seen.

Todd: Yeah, it's been a while, right?

Rachael: The magazines, newspapers used to be full of them.

Todd: Yeah. And they used to not have to say what all the ingredients were in foods and stuff, right? So these days you have to say exactly what's in the food, I think.

Rachael: Well, my mother and grandmother used to cook most things from scratch anyway. They weren't many packets or cans of anything at all. No instant food or instant cake. They used to cook everything from fresh ingredients. We knew what was in stuff.

Todd: We did too. On our farm, my grandparents farm, they grew their own vegetables. We used to can them.

Rachael: Yes, we used to do that too.

Todd: Yeah. Although it was funny, because ...

Rachael: Vegetables and fruit, and potatoes every year.

Todd: Right. It's funny, cause you call it canning, but it's actually, you put it in a jar.

Rachael: Jars, yes.

Todd: Right?

Rachael: You're doing it at home. You used jars.

Todd: You don't call it jarring, but actually I never remember putting it in a can.

Rachael: We called it preserving.

Todd: Preserving. Yeah. I hated that. We would do that all day for ... Usually all weekend and I dreaded that weekend.

Grammar

Used to + base verb

Use the modal **used to** when talking about past events that no longer occur.

Point 1: We often use **used to** when asked about present activities.

(Q) Do you play golf?

(A) I **used to** play but not anymore. I don't have time.

(Q) Do you play any instruments?

(A) Not really. I **used to** play the guitar but not anymore.

Point 2: We often use the phrase **not anymore** to clarify that the action does not happen presently.

(Q) Do you cook much?

(A) Not anymore. I **used to** though.

(Q) Do you see your friend from school?

(A) Not really. We **used to** meet once a week but now we are too busy with life.

Point 3: In a Yes/No question, we can omit the verb and reply by with just **used to** followed by **but** and a reason.

(Q) Do you study French?

(A) I **used to** but I gave up.

(Q) Do you you and your family travel much?

(A) We **used to** but now we don't have time.





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Rachael: Yes.

Todd: And, I was thinking the other day, it's interesting because we all have loving grandparents, or parents, **but our** parents used to do things that they can't do anymore. For example, we used to ride in **the back of** my grandfather's pickup truck ...

Rachael: Yes.

Todd: On the highway, which now is totally illegal, like it's a big no-no. We would get in the back of his truck and he would drive us **all over** the place in this old pickup truck. And like today, that's against the law, right?

Rachael: We **used to** have a station wagon. There are six kids in our family. We just all **piled into** the back of the station wagon. No seat belts, no car seats.

Todd: Right.

Rachael: Babies were in a little Moses basket on the back seat.

Todd: Yeah. And people **used to do** things like, also like you said, let kids run around the back of the station wagon or move around. You would strap things **to your** car and drive down the street. Sometimes you can't do that anymore, or you have to do it ... It's a little, bit more regulated **than before** I think, right?

Rachael: Yeah.

Todd: Yeah. We also **used to burn** our trash, which is now a big no-no in California.

Rachael: Really.

Todd: Yeah.

Rachael: We never used **to do that**.

Todd: Really?

Rachael: I can't comment **on that one**.

Todd: Yeah. We had these big barrels. We would burn the trash. If you watch movies, you'll see in America, people burning stuff in barrels to stay warm or whatever.

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