



Past Habits: Used To vs. Would — The Storyteller's Logic

THE FOREGROUND

What is this topic about?

This module teaches you how to paint a vivid, nostalgic picture of your history using specialized past structures. We explore "**Used to**" and "**Would**"—the patterns of memories, rituals, and personal evolution.

Why do people get confused?

Standard textbooks treat these as interchangeable. In reality, choosing the wrong one can break the cinematic flow of your story. The biggest confusion lies in the **Stative Trap**—using "Would" for feelings or locations where it doesn't belong.

Who is this for?

Storytellers and anyone who wants to bond with others by sharing their life experiences with natural emotional depth and rhythm.

Our Approach

We use the **Storytelling Toolkit** strategy. We teach you how to "layer" your memories: facts go first, rituals come next, and specific moments finish the picture.

The Introduction: Narrating Your Personal History

Language is the primary tool we use to share our history. When we describe our past habits, we aren't just stating facts; we are **inviting people into our world**. One provides the broad background, while the other focuses on the repeated rituals that make memories feel vivid and personal.

Mastering these structures allows you to share your personal history with natural emotional depth. It allows you to move from "I was a student" to "I **would spend** every Saturday at the library,

surrounded by the smell of old books." This guide will help you layer your past structures like a professional writer, helping your stories sound both natural and memorable.

THE RITUAL FORMULA

We would go to the park every Sunday.

Insight: Use 'Would' to make a memory feel warm and alive.

1. The Storyteller's Foundations

Used To: The Fact Structure

This is your all-rounder. It works for both **STATES** (being, liking, having) and **ACTIONS**. Use it for the broad strokes of your past.

- "I **used to live** in a small village by the sea."
- "She **used to be** very shy, but now she is a leader."
- "I **used to have** so much free time!"

Would: The Cinematic Structure

This is more evocative and often sounds more natural in storytelling. However, it **ONLY** works for repeated **ACTIONS**. It paints a picture of a ritual.

- "Every morning, I **would walk** down to the docks and watch the sunrise."
- "My grandfather **would tell** us incredible stories about his travels."

THE 'STATIVE' TRAP

✗ "I would live in London."

✓ "I used to live in London." (Living is a state, not a repeated action).

2. The Adaptation Triangle

Natives use three variations of "Used to" to describe how they are adapting to new, positive situations.

1. **Used to + Verb:** A past habit. "*I **used to live** in Paris.*"
2. **Be used to + Noun:** A current state of comfort. "*I **am used to** city life now.*"
3. **Get used to + Gerund:** The process of adapting. "*I'm **getting used to** speaking English!*"

3. Summary: Habit Comparison

Structure	Context	Short Example	Usage Note
Used To	Facts & States	"I used to be shy."	For background
Would	Rituals & Actions	"We would visit her."	For atmosphere
Get Used To	Adaptation	"I'm getting used to it."	For processes

Memory Workshop

PART 1: Storytelling Logic

Describe a place from your childhood using this 3-step layering:

1. **The Setting (Used to):** "The house **used to feel quiet and peaceful.**"
2. **The Ritual (Would):** "Every evening, my family _____."
3. **The Event (Past Simple):** "One day, we _____."

PART 2: Reflection

Write about one thing in your current life that you are now **getting used to** (e.g., a new job or a new routine).

The Final 10 Challenge

Test your Storytelling Logic with these 10 exercises. Choose between 'Used to', 'Would', or 'Be/Get used to'.

1. "When I was a child, I _____ (believe) in magic."
2. "Every Saturday, we _____ (go) to the market with my father."
3. "It was hard at first, but I'm slowly _____ (get used to / wake up) early."
4. "I _____ (not / like) vegetables when I was younger."
5. "My grandmother _____ (bake) the most delicious bread every morning."
6. "Are you _____ (be used to / drive) on the left side of the road yet?"
7. "We _____ (have) a big dog named Buster."
8. "On summer nights, we _____ (sit) on the porch and watch the stars."
9. "She _____ (live) in Tokyo, but she moved to London last year."
10. "I _____ (am used to / speak) English in meetings now; it feels much more natural."

The Logic & Explanation Key

Understand the nuances of nostalgia and adaptation.

- 1. used to believe:** Logic: State. Beliefs are states, not actions, so "would" cannot be used.
- 2. would go / used to go:** Logic: Ritual. Both work, but "would" sounds more evocative.
- 3. getting used to waking up:** Logic: Process. Use "getting used to" + gerund (-ing) for an ongoing adaptation.
- 4. didn't use to like:** Logic: State. Use the negative form of "used to" for past states.
- 5. would bake / used to bake:** Logic: Ritual. "Would" emphasizes the repeated nature of the action.
- 6. used to driving:** Logic: State of comfort. "Are you used to..." checks current familiarity.
- 7. used to have:** Logic: State. Long-term possession is usually expressed with "used to," not "would."
- 8. would sit / used to sit:** Logic: Atmosphere. "Would" paints a more vivid picture.
- 9. used to live:** Logic: State/Fact. Living somewhere is a broad background fact.

10. am used to speaking: Logic: Familiarity. "I am used to..." indicates you have reached a comfortable state.