



Past Tenses and Used To — B1 exercises

Printable worksheet · 23 questions · answer key with explanations on the last page
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Name _____ Date _____ Score _____ / 23

A. Multiple choice

10 questions

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. While I ____ dinner, the doorbell rang.
A) cooked B) was cooking C) had cooked D) cook
2. She ____ in Prague for years before she moved to Vienna.
A) lived B) was living C) had lived D) has lived
3. I ____ play the trumpet, but I gave it up at eighteen.
A) was using to B) used to C) use to D) am used to
4. He is not ____ to driving on the left.
A) use B) used C) using D) uses
5. The sun ____ when we finally reached the summit.
A) set B) was setting C) had set D) sets
6. Which sentence is correct?
A) I didn't used to like olives. B) I didn't use to like olives.
C) I not used to like olives. D) I wasn't use to like olives.
7. When I got home, someone ____ through my window.
A) climbed B) was climbing C) had climbed D) climbs
8. We ____ spend every August at my grandmother's cottage.
A) would B) were used to C) are used to D) use to
9. Which of these cannot be rewritten with would?
A) We used to walk to school. B) We used to visit them every Easter.
C) We used to own a caravan. D) We used to play cards on Sundays.
10. By the time the police arrived, the thieves ____.
A) escaped B) were escaping C) had escaped D) escape

B. Fill in the blank

8 questions

Write the missing word or words in the gap.

1. I _____ reading when the lights suddenly went out.
2. She _____ to live in Manchester before the family moved south.

3. By nine o'clock everybody _____ already gone home.
4. We didn't _____ to have a car when I was a child.
5. The kitchen was warm because somebody _____ been baking.
6. He is not _____ to getting up at five in the morning.
7. What _____ you doing when I called yesterday?
8. They _____ walk five miles to school every day in those years.

C. Sentence building

5 questions

Put the words in the correct order and write the sentence on the line.

1. phone / the / rang. / I / when / was / cooking

Interrupt a long action with a short one.

2. at / used / the / cello / play / She / to / school.

Describe a past habit that has stopped.

3. already / started / The / had / we / when / film / arrived.

Put one past event before another.

4. Christmas / We / in / would / spend / every / Scotland.

Use the alternative to used to for repeated actions.

5. working / to / used / He / is / nights. / not

Say somebody has not become accustomed to something.

Answer key

Every answer carries the reason behind it. Read the reason for the questions you got right as well — that is where you find out whether you were right for the right reason.

A. Multiple choice

1. **B) was cooking** — The past continuous provides the longer background action that a past simple event interrupts.
2. **C) had lived** — Before another past event, the earlier situation takes the past perfect.
3. **B) used to** — Used to marks a past habit that has stopped. The base form follows it.
4. **B) used** — Be used to means 'be accustomed to' and is followed by a noun or an -ing form.
5. **B) was setting** — The past continuous paints the scene in progress at the moment of arrival.
6. **B) I didn't use to like olives.** — After did, the verb returns to its base form: use, without the d.
7. **B) was climbing** — The past continuous shows the action already under way as the speaker arrived.
8. **A) would** — Would can replace used to for a repeated past action, though not for a past state.
9. **C) We used to own a caravan.** — Would works for repeated actions but not for states such as owning something.
10. **C) had escaped** — The escape was complete before the arrival, so it takes the past perfect.

B. Fill in the blank

1. **was** — The past continuous gives the longer action that a sudden event interrupts.
2. **used** — Used to marks a past state that has now ended.
3. **had** — The past perfect places the departure before the stated past time.
4. **use** — After didn't, used loses its d and returns to the base form.
5. **had** — The past perfect continuous explains a past condition by an earlier activity.
6. **used** — Be used to means accustomed to, and takes an -ing form after it.
7. **were** — A past action in progress at a specific moment takes the past continuous.
8. **would** — Would expresses a repeated past action, though it cannot express a past state.

C. Sentence building

1. **I was cooking when the phone rang.**
2. **She used to play the cello at school.**
3. **The film had already started when we arrived.**
4. **We would spend every Christmas in Scotland.**
5. **He is not used to working nights.**