

VOICE OF AMERICA - EVERYDAY GRAMMAR

Used to - be used to - get used to

Hi everyone, how was your weekend? Mine was relaxing! Let me tell you about it. Listen for me to say the words “**used to**” three times.

On Saturday, I got up early to go to my 7 o'clock yoga class. Most of my friends like to sleep late on weekends. But I've been going to this class for a year now. So I *am used to* waking at sunrise.

A few weeks ago, I finally persuaded my friend Tania to come. She is not a morning person. But after a month of our new routine, she is *getting used to* the early hours.

After class, we like to get breakfast at a café down the street. Every week, she orders the same thing: banana pancakes. I *used to* eat pancakes. But now I enjoy something lighter, like yogurt and fruit.

I hope you heard me say “used to” three times as I told my story. But each phrase looks and sounds a little different. These were the phrases from the story:

be used to

get used to

used to

The phrase “used to” is unrelated to the other two phrases. But “be used to” and “get used to” have similar meanings and sentence structures.

Some English learners have trouble distinguishing between the three. Others can tell them apart but have trouble forming sentences with them. So, on today's *Everyday Grammar* program, I will show you how to recognize and use each.

Used to

Let's start with the last phrase, “used to.” “Used to” is considered a modal verb, though an unusual one, since it is only found in the past tense.

Choose “used to” to say that something existed or happened repeatedly in the past but does not exist or happen now. For example, I said, “I used to eat pancakes.” That means I ate them repeatedly in the past but do not anymore.

The sentence structure for “used to” will always go like this:

subject + used to + base verb

The base form of a verb is its shortest form, with no -s ending.

Look for that structure in these examples, including my own:

I *used to* eat pancakes. But now I enjoy something lighter, like yogurt and fruit.

Sacha *used to* live on Atlantic Avenue near Vanderbilt Street.

He *didn't use to* believe in ghosts. But he said he saw one at his grandmother's house.

As you just heard, the negative of “used to” is “did not use to” or the more common “didn't use to.” Notice the word “use” does not end with the letter -d in the negative. That is because “did” is already the past tense.

Be used to

Next, let's talk about "be used to." Choose "be used to" to say you are accustomed to something, and so it seems normal or usual. If you *are used to* something, it is not difficult, new or strange.

In "be used to," the verb "be" can take the present, past or future tense (though future is less common). And the words "used to" are an adjective, not a modal verb.

Earlier you heard the present tense "am" in my sentence "I am used to waking at sunrise." That means I am accustomed to it. The sentence structure goes like this:

subject + be + used to + gerund, noun or pronoun

In other words, the phrase "be used to" will be followed by some kind of noun – whether gerund (*gérondif*) or otherwise. (You may remember that a gerund is a kind of noun that ends in i-n-g.)

Listen to a few examples, including my own. Pay attention to the verb tense of "be." And, note that nouns follow "be used to.":

But I've been going to this class for a year now. So I *am used to* waking at sunrise.

She doesn't think Dami is strange. She *is used to* him.

Look, the bird is frightened. It *is not used to* large crowds.

Notice that the negative for "be used to" is "be not used to."

Get used to

And, finally, we have "get used to." Remember -- this phrase is related in meaning to "be used to." The difference is that "get used to" means someone is, was or will become accustomed to something. So, the verb "get" in the phrase can take the present, past or future tense.

For example, I said this about Tania: "She is getting used to the early hours." That means she is becoming accustomed to being awake in the early morning.

The words "used to" in the phrase "get used to" are also an adjective. The sentence structure goes like this:

subject + get + used to + gerund, noun or pronoun

Listen for the verb tense of "get" in the following examples. And take note that nouns follow "get used to."

But after a month of our new routine, she is *getting used to* the early hours.

I hated this haircut at first. But I *got used to* it. I like it now!

The baby will *not get used to* the new sitter. I think she misses her dad.

Note the negative of "get used to," which is "not get used to."

And that's it for today. I hope you have a relaxing weekend ahead, too.

I'm Alice Bryant.

<https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/the-difference-used-to-be-used-to-get-used-to/5245290.html>