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Grammar Reference

1. Grammar Reference (Please remember that this grammar reference section is not a lesson plan for teachers. In fact, it is and should be designed in such a way that students can comprehend the grammar points on their own.)

a. Clauses and phrases showing contrast and exception

We use “*while*, *unlike* and *in contrast to*” to present contrasting information, especially in writing.

Examples: *While* many Americans drive every day, people in Thailand use public transportation.
Unlike the average Chinese people, Cambodians don't use credit cards very often.
In contrast to the average Canadian, Vietnamese people don't usually eat out.

We use “*except (that)*, *except (for)*, and *except for the fact (that)*” to show an exception.

Examples: I'm very similar to the average American *except that* I don't have a car.
People in Cambodia don't eat out *except for* on special occasions.
Vietnamese people typically drink less beer, *except for the fact that* they consume more vegetable.

We use *whereas* especially in formal writing, to present contrasting information.

Example: *Whereas* the bottled water market is huge in Japan, it is very small in Cambodia.

b. Past habitual with *used to* and *would*

We use “*used to*” and “*would*” to describe habits or truths in the past; they do not happen or are not true in the present.

However, **would** cannot be used with stative verbs such as live, be, have or like.

We can use "**used to**" or "**would**" to describe **repeated actions in the past**.

We only use "**used to**" for **truths in the past**.

Examples: "**used to**" or "**would**"

I **used to** get up at 6am to go to school.

I **would** get up at 6am to go to school.

"used to"

I **used to** live in France. Not: ~~I would live in France.~~

I **used to** have a pet rabbit. Not: ~~I would have a pet rabbit.~~

These are truths in the past.

"used to" vs. **"would"** Compare the following sentences:

Examples: I **used to / would go** camping when I was young. "**go**" describes a repeated action.

I used to **love** camping when I was young.

"love" describes a truth.

To ask questions about habitual action or situation in the past, we use **Did ... use to ...?** Not **Would ...?**

Examples: **Did you use to go** to the library when you were a high school student?

Did she use to play online games late at night?

We use the negative question **Didn't ... use to ...?** to confirm a guess about past habitual actions or situations.

Examples: **Didn't you use to work** as a cashier at a restaurant after school?

Didn't they use to play on the school football team?