



Talking About Habits

- Here are some ways of talking about habits.

A. The present simple tense used together with a frequency adverb describes someone's present routine or habit.

I always do my shopping at the mall.

I often go for a run in the evening.

B. The present continuous tense can be used to describe a habit, especially an annoying one.

I am always losing my glasses. It drives me crazy!

You are always interrupting me when I'm trying to say something. I wish you'd listen to me more carefully.

However, the present continuous is not always used to criticize something.

I love my Mom. She's always giving me hugs and helping me. She is a wonderful person.

Match the sentences a. - e. in the present continuous with the correct advice 1 - 5:

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. She is always saying silly things in class. | 1. She should realize the other students don't like her jokes. |
| b. She is continually repeating the same errors in her writing. | 2. She should review her work and think about why she is making certain errors. |
| c. She is forever annoying other students with her silly jokes. | 3. She should try to be on time for class. |
| d. She is frequently running late and then making excuses. | 4. She should get more sleep. |
| e. She is always complaining that she is tired. | 5. She should quieten down and listen to the teacher more. |

C. Will can be used to talk about typical habits or behavior in the present. The behavior may be positive or negative.

He'll wait every day by the letter box, hoping for a letter from her. It's so romantic!

She won't answer her phone in the evenings. I wish she would!

D. Would can be used to express a past action. It is not used to express a past state.

When I was a child, I would read from morning until night.

I'd hear my mother calling but I'd never answer her.

I'd sit in my favorite chair and dream about places far away.

When I was young, I used to have a dollhouse.

~~*When I was young, I would have a dollhouse. (Incorrect)*~~

Read these sentences and say which use **would** correctly.

- When I was a young man I'd walk around the city each morning making sketches of people.
- I'd visit the art gallery once a week.
- I'd believe that I could be a successful painter.
- When I was a little older, I'd live in an attic and painted every day.

E. Used to expresses a past action or state. It is used for something that often happened but doesn't happen now.

I used to go for a run every morning when I was a young man. Now I go for a walk instead.

I used to own a sports car. I sold it when our first baby was born.

(Used to is often confused with be / get used to. If you are used to something, you are accustomed to it. It isn't strange or unusual for you.e.g.

At first I thought the other students in this class were too noisy. Now I am used to them. I think this class is fun.)

F. You can also use the past simple to describe habits in the past.

Every day I caught the bus to work, chatted to my fellow employees and then began to look at my mail. I enjoyed my job and was very sad when I was made redundant.

Answers: **B.** a. 5, b. 2, c. 1, d. 3, e. 4. **D.** a. Correct, b. Correct, c. Incorrect, d. Incorrect.

