

7 Reference

Subject and object questions

Object questions

When a *Wh-* question word is the object of the question, we use the normal question word order.

Form: question word + auxiliary + subject + verb

Who did you shout at?

What did you buy?

Most questions that we ask are object questions.

Subject questions

When a *Wh-* question word is the subject of the question, the word order is the same as an affirmative sentence (there is no 'inversion' and we don't use an auxiliary verb).

Form: question word + verb + object

Who shouted at you? (NOT: ~~Who did shout at you?~~)

What happened? (NOT: ~~What did happen?~~)

used to and would

I used to live in Rome.

She didn't use to like olives.

She wouldn't return my phone calls.

Did you use to live in Italy? Yes, I did. / No, I didn't.

Would your parents tell you off for shouting?



There is no 'd' in the spelling of *use to* in negatives and questions.

We didn't use to like our teacher.

Did you use to study art?

We use *used to* and *would* to talk about repeated actions in the past which don't happen now. We only use *used to* to talk about states in the past.

They used to/would meet every day. (action)

I used to love him. NOT: ~~†would love him.~~ (state)

We use the Past Simple, not *used to*, to describe how long something lasted.

I worked in Italy for five years. NOT: ~~†used to work in Italy for five years.~~

We use the Past Simple, NOT *used to/would*, to talk about a single event in the past.

I broke my leg skiing. NOT: ~~†used to break my leg skiing.~~

We use the Present Simple, not *used to*, to talk about habits which are true now.

I usually play football three times a week.

Modals of ability, past and present

We use *can*, *could* and *be able to* to describe general ability.

I can swim but I can't dive.

I could speak French, but I couldn't speak German when I was at school.

We do not often use *be able to* in the present tense unless it is after another verb.

I want to be able to help my kids with their homework.

We use *be able to* to describe when someone actually succeeded in doing something, not *could*.

She was able to visit him every week.

She could visit him every week. – This means she had the ability, but NOT that she actually did it.

If we want to emphasise that the action is difficult, we can use *manage to* in the present or past.

I usually manage to visit forty countries every year.

I managed to finish the book but it was very boring.

In the negative we can use *couldn't*, *wasn't able to*, and *didn't manage to* for a specific action.

I couldn't book the tickets.

I wasn't able to book the tickets.

I didn't manage to book the tickets.

Key vocabulary

Learning and education

academic formal/continuous assessment
do a degree/an exam/a course/some research/
a subject/your best/well at something
fail an exam/a subject get good marks/a degree
go to lectures/to class graduate from university
make a mistake/progress/notes/a decision/
a suggestion pass an exam/a subject
revise notes/a subject seminar
distance/blended learning
take an exam/a course/notes/a subject

Personal qualities (2)

calm clear encouraging frightening inspiring
interesting knowledgeable patient strict
understanding

Learning idioms

bookworm crash course be thrown into something
steep learning curve give someone a hand
haven't got a clue know something inside out
learn by heart make a wild guess
pass with flying colours piece of cake
practice makes perfect teacher's pet
throw someone in at the deep end

Learning phrasal verbs

brush up on pick (something) up get down to (work)
get through (an exam) mess around



ACTIVEBOOK

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see Writing bank page 159