

IN THE PAST, WE USED TO ...

Age: Teenager/Adult

Level: Intermediate (B1) and above

Time: 45–60 minutes

Activity: In this lesson, students will:

- » look at photos and guess what era they are from
- » describe modern-day equivalents of objects in the photos
- » use *used to* to compare old objects with their modern equivalents

Language focus: *used to*

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student; internet access (optional)

PROCEDURE

1. Project the photos from page 1 of the worksheet on the board. Do not give out the worksheet yet. Tell the students all the objects in the photos are from two different decades in the 20th century (explain *decades* if necessary). Ask the students if they can guess which two decades they are from. To help, you may wish to give students a choice, e.g.: 1990s, 1980s, 1970s, 1960s. Give students a couple of minutes to decide on the answer in pairs.
2. Feed back as a whole class, informing the students that these photos are from the 1980s and the 1960s.
3. Hand out the worksheets. In pairs, students first see if they can guess which picture is from which decade. When they have finished, ask students to look at question 2 and try to name/describe what each picture is showing.
4. Go through the answers.
5. Explain that today students are going to talk about items that *used to* be popular in the past. If your class hasn't encountered the construction *used to* before, explain that it is used to talk about something that was common in the past, but isn't now.
6. Give an example sentence using one of the photos, e.g. *In the 1980s, we used to listen to music on cassette tapes, but now we listen to music on ...* (Elicit the answer from the class.)

Write the sentence on the board, highlighting the *used to / but now ...* construction. Give other examples as necessary.
7. In pairs, ask students to think how each of the items in the pictures has changed. Set a time limit (say five minutes).
8. Feed back as a whole class, writing key words on the board.

9. In pairs (or individually for higher level/confident classes), ask students to write sentences about each photo using *used to*. Put the following frame on the board to help, if necessary:

In the 1960s/1980s, (we) used to..., but now...

Monitor and support as necessary.

10. As an extension, you could ask students to think of (or research online) items from other decades in the past and speak/write about them using *used to*.

Key:



Calculator from the 1960s. Now, calculators are smaller, digital, part of mobile phones, etc.



Camera from the 1960s. Now, cameras are digital, a part of a mobile phone, have lots of features, can store photos, etc.



A cassette tape, from the 1980s. Now music is stored digitally, often on mobile phones. It is downloaded/streamed, etc.



A computer, from the 1980s. Now, computers are laptops, they are smaller, lighter, portable, etc.



A telephone, from the 1980s. Now, mobile phones are used which are smaller, lighter, have many more functions, etc.



A tape deck, from the 1980s. Now music is played through mobile phones, etc.



A telephone, from the 1960s. As image 5.



A television, from the 1960s. Now TVs are larger, thinner, show colour programmes, are digital, use a remote control, etc.



A television, from the 1980s. As above.



Clothes/fashion from the 1960s. Now, skirts are (often) longer, we wear hats less often, hairstyles are different, etc.

