

A Will and would

We can use **will** (for the present) and **would** (for the past) to talk about –

☆ characteristic behaviour or habits:

- Every day Dan **will** come home from work and turn on the TV.
- At school she **would** always sit quietly and pay attention.

☆ things that are or were always true:

- Cold weather **will** kill certain plants.
- During the war, people **would** eat all kinds of things that we don't eat now.

(For the use of **will** to talk about the future, see Unit 9.)

We don't use **will** or **would** in this way to talk about a *particular* occasion. Compare:

- Each time I gave him a problem he **would solve** it for me. *and*
- Last night I gave him a problem and he **solved** it for me. (*not ... he would solve it ...*)

However, we can use **will not (won't)** and **would not (wouldn't)** in either case. Compare:

- He **would / wouldn't** walk the five miles to his place of work. (characteristic behaviour) *and*
- She **wouldn't** say what was wrong when I asked her.

B

In speech, we can stress **will** or **would** to criticise people's characteristic behaviour or habits:

- She just **won't** do the washing up when I ask her.
- I was happy when Ryan left. He **would** talk about people behind their backs.

We can also express disapproval of something they have done using **will**:

- 'I feel sick.' 'Well, if you **will** eat so much, I'm not surprised.'

C

We can use **will** to draw conclusions or state assumptions about things that are the case now (see also Unit 9B):

- Martina **will** be at home by now. Let's go and see her.
- You **will** know that Ewan and Lucy are engaged. (= I assume you already know)

D Would and used to

When we talk about repeated events in the past that don't happen now we can use either **would** or **used to + infinitive**. However, we can use **would** only if the time reference is clear. Compare:

- We **used to play** in the garden. (*not We would play ...; time reference not given*) *and*
- Whenever we went to my uncle's house, we **would / used to play** in the garden.

We can use **used to** but not **would** when we talk about past states that have changed:

- The factory **used to** be over there.
- Didn't you **use to** have red hair?

We don't use either **used to** or **would** when we say exactly how many times in total something happened, how long something took, or that a single event happened at a given past time:

- We **visited** Switzerland four times during the 1990s. (*not We would / used to visit ...*)
- She **went** to Jamaica last month. (*not She would / used to go to Jamaica last month.*)

E

Would / will have + past participle

To talk about an *unreal past* situation – that is, an imaginary situation or a situation that might have happened in the past, but didn't – we use **would have + past participle**:

- I **would have been** happy to see him, but I didn't have time.

However, to say that we think a past situation actually happened, we use **will have + past participle**:

- As it was cloudy, few people **will have seen** last night's lunar eclipse. (*rather than ... would have seen ...*)

Exercises

16.1 Complete the doctor and patient speech bubbles using **will** or **would** followed by one of these verbs. If **will** or **would** are not possible, use a verb in the past simple. **A & C**

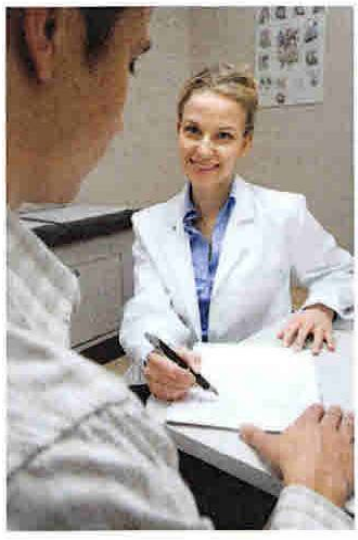
be cause exercise find have know sit spend

1 Most days I eight hours or more in front of my computer.

2 Yesterday I a sharp pain in my lower back.

3 No, I'm not that fit now. When I was at college, I in the gym most days.

4 When I tried to stand I that I couldn't straighten up.



5 Over time poor posture back pain.

6 Before computers came along, people rarely still for so long.

7 I'm sure you about the need to take regular breaks.

8 That probably the result of sitting badly.

16.2 If necessary, correct these sentences using **would** or **used to**. If neither **would** nor **used to** is correct, use a past simple verb form. **D**

- 1 I would enjoy studying Latin when I was at school.
- 2 Orwell would spend winters in Spain and summers in England.
- 3 We would live in a bungalow on the south coast, and then we moved to a flat in town.
- 4 You used to teach at Halston University, didn't you?
- 5 On Saturdays and Sundays the ferry used to take tourists across to the island.
- 6 The committee would meet four times last week, but still no decision has been reached.

16.3 Complete these sentences with **will have** or **would have** and the past participle of one of these verbs. **E**

approve buy hear hurt notice prefer watch

- 1 According to official figures, over half the population the final of the song contest on TV last night.
- 2 I enjoyed the exhibition – but I don't think my grandmother of it.
- 3 I don't think the dog anyone, but I was still glad when the owner took it away.
- 4 I'm sure by now you about yesterday's robbery at the supermarket.
- 5 The train journey was quite comfortable, although I to fly.
- 6 Regular readers the return of a popular feature to our website.
- 7 A: Did you like the present Justin gave you for your birthday? B: Well, an umbrella stand isn't something I myself, but I suppose it might be useful.

16.4 Complete B's responses below to show criticism or disapproval. **B**

- 1 A: I think I'm putting on weight. B: Well, if you
- 2 A: I've got a headache. B: Well, if you
- 3 A: I'm really hot. B: Well, if you