

13C Technophobe or technophile?

Activity type: Writing – Text completion – Pairs

Aim: To practise forms for expressing past habits and to encourage learners to make style decisions

Language: *used to* and *would* for past habits – Use any time after 13.3.

Preparation: Make one copy of the worksheet for each learner.

Time: 30–40 minutes

- 1 Empty your pockets and/or bag of any electronic gadgets (mobile phone / memory stick, etc.) and put them on your desk. Learners do the same. Ask learners: *Have these things made your life easier or better? How? or Why not?*
- 2 Divide learners into pairs and hand out the worksheets. Explain that this is a posting on a technology message board, but the verbs have been removed. In their pairs, learners discuss which verb from the box below might go into each gap. (Note: At this stage, learners should use one of the copies of the worksheet to make a note of which verb they think is appropriate. They should not worry about form at the moment, only meaning/collocation. Give a time limit of about ten minutes for this. When the time is up, get class feedback on learners' decisions.)
- 3 Refer learners to the Grammar section on *would / used to* on Coursebook p109. Pairs now work together using the second worksheet and add the verbs to the gaps, deciding where *would / used to* or the past simple is appropriate. Advise learners that *used to* should not be overused. Native speakers tend to use *used to* followed by a series of verbs with *would* and verbs in the past simple. Advise them also that once *would* has been used with one verb, it is not used again before the next verb if the subject is not repeated. (Example: *We would often have a cup of tea and chat.*)
- 4 When learners have finished, go over the possible answers (below) with the class and discuss with them any alternatives that they have put down.

Possible answers

1 *used to work* 2 *had* 3 *would answer* 4 *open* 5 *would tell* 6 *would read*
7 *wanted* 8 *would think* 9 *would call* 10 *dictate* 11 *would type* 12 *post*
13 *would get* 14 *would get* 15 *used to go* 16 *would get* 17 *go* 18 *took*
19 *would sit* 20 *read* 21 *arrived* 22 *would have* 23 *go* 24 *have*

Extension

Ask learners whether or not they agree that new technology has made life more stressful. Learners write a reply to the post, either agreeing that technology has made life worse, or disagreeing and explaining why it has made their own lives better.

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← → ↻ ×

How has technology improved your life?

Message 1 posted by – NedLudd – 19 hours ago

Improved my life? Well, let's see ...

Years ago, I ¹ _____ in a great office. I ² _____ a telephone, a desk and a secretary. My secretary ³ _____ my telephone calls and ⁴ _____ my mail, too. If a letter looked important, she ⁵ _____ me, and I ⁶ _____ it. When I ⁷ _____ to write a letter, I ⁸ _____ about it, and when I was ready, I ⁹ _____ my secretary in, ¹⁰ _____ it to her and she ¹¹ _____ it and ¹² _____ it. The letter ¹³ _____ to the other person in a few days, and a few days later, I ¹⁴ _____ an answer. Now ... well, now I still work in my office. I have a computer but no secretary. I get hundreds of emails a day – and I spend half an hour every morning deleting the spam. Then I have to answer the genuine emails myself. I have to do it quickly, because if people don't get an answer in a few hours, they start sending more emails. I've got a phone on my desk that rings all the time and I have to take my own calls – and my mobile phone is always beeping. Sometimes I get a telephone call from a customer, a text from my boss and an email from Head Office all at the same time!

I ¹⁵ _____ to quite a few meetings at Head Office. I ¹⁶ _____ the train and ¹⁷ _____ to London. The journey ¹⁸ _____ about two hours, I ¹⁹ _____ and ²⁰ _____ the paper, and I always ²¹ _____ relaxed. It was nice to go to London every few weeks. We ²² _____ the meeting and then ²³ _____ out and ²⁴ _____ some lunch. Not like today. Today I don't go to meetings much any more – we usually video-conference. This means we spend hours trying to get the technology working, and then we have the meeting at our desks. Then the computer crashes, of course! Even if I do go to London, it's not the same. I work on my laptop and get emails on my mobile on the train, and the office rings me every ten minutes. It's the same when I go on holiday.

So, 'improved my life'? No – increased my work, increased my stress and stopped me from ever relaxing ... ☹ ☹

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answer arrive call dictate get (x3) go (x3) have (x3) open
post read (x2) sit take tell think type want work