

2.3

UNIT 2 Past

Sweet memories

Language focus

Used to**Level**Intermediate or
upper-intermediate**Type**

Board game

Topic

Growing-up memories

Interaction

Groups of two to six

Time

20–30 minutes

MaterialBoard and dice (one per
group), counters (one per
student)**Vocabulary**Verbs: *grow up, fall down, break, fight with, fail, go on a trip, have a date*Nouns: *childhood memory, toy, tree house, pet, (school) subject, complaints, idol, hero, date, curfew, school dance***Comments**

This game provides a lot of input and intensive practice with a wide range of verbs in the simple past and habitual past with *used to*. Because the subject of childhood and teenage memories is so close to everyone's heart, the game promotes a lot of conversation and better student rapport. As such, it should be reserved for the more communicative end of the lesson and used for fluency building.

Language outputA: *Who did you use to fight with when you were a teenager?*B: *I used to fight a lot with my sister.*A: *Why?*B: *Well, because she used to borrow my clothes without asking me first.*A: *And who used to win?*B: *She did, because my mother was always on her side.***Procedures**

- 1 Prepare questions related to childhood and teenage experiences. Ask one at a time, elicit answers from the class, and continue the conversation from there, as shown in **Language output**. Draw students' attention to the meaning and use of *used to*, and contrast it with the simple past if necessary.
- 2 Divide the class into groups and hand out the material.
- 3 Playing the game:
 - ▶ Players place their counters at the starting point (symbol of birth: the stork) on the board.
 - ▶ They take turns casting the dice and moving along the board accordingly.
 - ▶ Whenever a player lands on a square with a question in it, someone in the group asks him or her that question, and the player answers. The group should then explore the topic with further questions, answers, comments, etc. Encourage the appropriate use of the simple past and *used to*.
 - ▶ Whenever a player lands on one of the squares containing happy or unhappy events of life, he or she must follow the instructions in them.
 - ▶ The first player to get to (but not beyond) the finishing point (symbol of graduation: the mortarboard) wins the game.

Variations

- 1 If you are teaching teenagers, change the questions so as to suit their young age.
- 2 If you want to let your students decide what to talk about and formulate the questions themselves, replace the questions on the board with prompts, e.g. *GROW UP, SCHOOL, TOYS, GAMES, DATING, MOTHER, BROTHERS & SISTERS*, etc.

Note on class size

If students are playing in pairs or groups of three, use coins instead of dice. That way they will move either one square (heads) or two squares (tails), and have more opportunities to talk.

