

A House in the Country

Word Work

Language in Use

“..was used to..” “..got used to..”

A. In the story of Ray and Siri there are many examples of things that one or either of them were accustomed to doing – things they had been doing for some time and which were familiar to them.

For example, what is it that Siri, in this extract, is accustomed to doing?

When Ray brought furniture for Siri’s room, Siri looked dismayed.
 “What’s wrong?”
 “I don’t need all this.’ Siri pointed at the cupboard and the new bed, the new pillow and mats.
 ‘Some comfort won’t harm.’
 ‘I have nothing to put in the cupboard. The old bed was fine, just as it was.’

Siri doesn’t see the purpose in having a new bed, etc. He was quite happy with his old bed. We can, therefore, say:

Siri was used to sleeping on an old bed and didn’t see the need for a new one.

What was Siri used to in the next extract?

‘The radio?’ Ray asked. Siri always had a radio on somewhere in the house droning public service. ‘Radio is not on?’

1. *Siri was used to* _____.

What were Ray or Siri used to doing in the following extracts?

The old conventions of Colombo serfdom died years ago, but Siri kept saying ‘Sir’ and circumscribing their roles.

2. _____

Although in England Ray had done many of these things himself, here he found he needed Siri.

3. _____

It was the first time since childhood that Ray had had a constant companion.

4. _____

You now have four examples of ‘was used to’. Add them to table A at the end of this exercise.

B. In the story of Ray and Siri, there are a number of things that the two characters were NOT used to doing: they were not accustomed to doing some things in the past HOWEVER they learnt to do them. They accepted new things. For example, look at the following extract:

In the two years that Ray had been back in the country there had been many curfews. They had lost their significance.

We can deduce that two years previously – before he returned to the country – he had not been used to curfews. However, two years later there have been many curfews, and they no longer had an effect on him ('they had lost their significance'). In other words, over a period of time (two years) he became familiar with curfews. In other words **Ray got used to curfews.**

What did Ray or Siri get used to in the following extracts?

He had never been given such complete responsibility before. Ray didn't understand this. It took time for him to see Siri as himself.

1. _____

Siri seemed exhilarated by the freedom he had to use any material he desired to turn ideas into reality, even his own ideas.

2. _____

Although in England Ray had done many of these things himself, here he found he needed Siri.

3. _____

(The third extract also appeared in the exercises for 'was used to'. How is this possible?)

Add these three sentences to table B at the end of the exercise.



C. Now look at the following extracts. Some tell us about situations where Ray or Siri were used to doing something and some where Ray or Siri got used to doing something. Which is which? Add your completed sentences to the correct table, A or B, at the end of this exercise.

Usually Ray walked for about twenty minutes. On his way back he would collect a newspaper from the small general store near the temple.

1. _____

Even two days ago he told me that he will not stop selling newspapers just like that. But they said he must stop, or it will be the end for him. I don't know why he continued.'

2. _____

Ray felt things had to change incrementally: he acquiesced and played the roles Siri expected.

3. _____

He found himself thinking that without Siri he would have to make his own morning tea again.

4. _____

Ray would normally find the tray on a glass table. He had learned to accept this service as a part of life.

5. _____

TABLE A (.....was used to.....)
<i>Siri was used to sleeping on an old bed.</i>

TABLE B (.....got used to.....)
<i>Ray got used to curfews.</i>

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Language in Use

“..used to”

In the story both Ray and Siri **used to do things** that they don't do any more. In other words, they stopped doing something that once was customary.

For example, Ray used to live in England.

Ray had not planned on having any help or company when he first returned to Colombo from England.

Ray used to live in England, but now he lives in Colombo.

Siri, on the other hand, used to live in the country, where his brother still lives.

Siri used to live in a village, but now he lives in Colombo.

‘Go back to the country? Village life?’ Siri smiled like a little boy thinking about the ripeness of mangoes. ‘Yes. Yes, I think I could go back to a life in the country. Like my brother’s. If there was a house

Look at these quotes from the text, and say what Ray or Siri used to do. Write complete sentences like the examples above. There may be more than one example to take from each quote.

He'd had a secure job with a building society, a flat in London, a car, and a happy circle of acquaintances.

1. _____

2. _____

There had also been a woman he'd spend a night or two with from time to time. But they never had much to talk about and quite often he simply thought about going back to Sri Lanka

3. _____

4. _____

His father had tried milch cows, but couldn't compete with the local MP's people.

5. _____

6. _____

'Several times they told him to stop selling those newspapers. Mister Ibrahim didn't listen.

7. _____

8. _____

This house had nothing of the elegance of his converted London flat, nor the sensuality of the open tropical houses of his Sri Lankan childhood.

9. _____

10. _____



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Word Work

Language in Context:

Sequencing time: Past tenses.

1. Look at this section from the story. The parts are not in the right order. Can you find a better sequence for the story to make sense.

- 1 He hoped he would find out what he wanted once he had freed himself from the constraints of his London life, and once he had retrieved his past.
2. He resigned from his job, sold his flat and left.
3. Ray had not planned on having any help or company when he first returned to Colombo from England.
4. That year he too decided he would go back home.
5. The business of moving absorbed his energies, and he had no time to think.
6. One summer she went back home to Ulster; she got married.
7. But they had never had much to talk about and quite often he simply thought about going back to Sri Lanka.
8. He'd had a secure job with a building society, a flat in London, a car, and a happy circle of acquaintances.
9. He had a house left to him in Colombo and money saved over the years.
10. There had also been a woman he's spent a night or two with from time to time.

NOTE:

'Once' is used here to mean 'when this has occurred'. This tells us that Ray assumes or hopes that he will "find himself" after he has arrived in Sri Lanka. Because it refers to a time, we can see that the time being referred to is before the result of the action, so we use the past perfect:

'once he had freed himself' means he will reach a point AFTER WHICH he will be free.

Do not confuse this word with 'since'.

2. **REMEMBER:** The two tenses used here are the **simple past** and the **past perfect**. The simple past sets the time of the narrative or story, and the past perfect is used to talk about earlier events.

There are 10 sequences of events outlined above. They are

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. finding out what he wanted/retrieving his past | 6. friend getting married |
| 2. resigning from job/selling house | 7. not having things to talk about |
| 3. not planning on having help | 8. having a secure job/flat etc |
| 4. deciding to return to Colombo | 9. having a house left to him |
| 5. having no time to think | 10. spending some nights with a woman |

Put these events into the correct 'time box'. The middle box represents the time of the narrative (simple past) the first box represents time or actions which happened before the time of the narrative (past perfect) and the third box represents time that hasn't happened yet, or it is unknown if the event has happened.

Before narrative time	Narrative time	After narrative time

3. In another part of the story, Ray sees a burnt out shop where the owner has died. Use the notes below and work in groups to reconstruct the story. Use the sequence you are given.

Connectors.
Use only: **and** or **but**

A

rebels/burn shop

B

rebels/stop sell/
papers

C

Ibrahim/sell/
newspapers

D

Ray/look/destructi
on

E

Ray/see/burnt
shop

F

Ibrahim/die

G

Ray/walk

H

Ibrahim/refuse

Sequence 1	G	D	C	A	B	H	F	D
Sequence 2	G	D	H	F	C	B	E	F

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Glossary

Note: these definitions are accurate for the context of the story but may have different meaning in different contexts.

babble	<i>sound of many people talking</i>	plummeted	<i>fell rapidly</i>
buckled	<i>bent/twisted by heat</i>	puffs	<i>small amounts of smoke</i>
building society	<i>a kind of bank used for buying houses.</i>	pungent	<i>strong smell</i>
cardamon	<i>spice used in Eastern cooking</i>	running amok	<i>out of control</i>
charred	<i>carbonised by burning</i>	rut	<i>something you can't get out of</i>
cinnamon	<i>spice used in cooking</i>	sarong	<i>skirt-like garment for men or women</i>
clasped	<i>held tightly</i>	serfdom	<i>feudal slavery</i>
clogged	<i>blocked</i>	servicing his turn	<i>helping in his own way</i>
cloves	<i>spice used in cooking</i>	shoved	<i>pushed carelessly</i>
corrugated	<i>made into waves or wrinkles</i>	shutters	<i>wooden window protectors</i>
crows	<i>black birds</i>	Sinhala	<i>language spoken in Sri Lanka</i>
curfew	<i>regulation obliging people to stay at home</i>	slats	<i>thin strip of wood</i>
dangled	<i>hang loosely</i>	smudged	<i>blurred</i>
droning	<i>continuous low sound</i>	snorted	<i>noise made through nose</i>
faltered	<i>failed, became uncertain</i>	staining	<i>colouring</i>
fireflies	<i>flying insects</i>	stalking	<i>as if hunting</i>
gecko	<i>wall lizard</i>	strewn	<i>left carelessly</i>
glowing	<i>luminous appearance</i>	tea-cosy	<i>soft cover for tea-pot</i>
gouged	<i>cut deeply</i>	thud	<i>soft, heavy sound</i>
gravel	<i>small stones used for paths etc</i>	thugs	<i>cut-throat; ruffian</i>
grubby	<i>dirty</i>	Tigers	<i>Tamil Tigers - group of rebels fighting for Tamil independence</i>
marbles	<i>small glass balls used in children's games</i>	tugging	<i>pulling</i>
milch cows	<i>milk cows</i>	waning	<i>decreasing in size</i>
moth	<i>cloth eating insect usually seen at night around lights</i>	wings	<i>side piece of a building</i>
mottled	<i>uneven colouring</i>	wood grain	<i>direction of the fibres of wood</i>

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Glossary

Nota: estas definições são correctas no contexto da história mas podem ter significados diferentes em contextos diferentes.

babble	<i>burburinho</i>	strewn	<i>espalhados</i>
buckled	<i>retorcido</i>	tea-cosy	<i>abafador de bule</i>
building society	<i>espécie de banco para empréstimos para comprar casas.</i>	thud	<i>som pesado</i>
		thugs	<i>rufiões</i>
cardamon	<i>especiaria: cardamomo</i>	Tigers	<i>Tigres Tamil - grupo de rebeldes que lutam pela independência Tamil</i>
charred	<i>carbonizados</i>		<i>a puxar</i>
cinnamon	<i>canela</i>	tugging	<i>no quarto minguante</i>
clasped	<i>entrelaçadas</i>	waning	<i>alas</i>
clogged	<i>apertada</i>	wings	<i>textura da madeira</i>
cloves	<i>cravinho da Índia</i>	wood grain	
corrugated	<i>ondulada</i>		
crows	<i>corvos</i>		
curfew	<i>recolher obrigatório</i>		
dangled	<i>a baloiçar</i>		
droning	<i>emitindo em som monótono</i>		
faltered	<i>falhou-lhe</i>		
fireflies	<i>luzicus</i>		
gecko	<i>geco,</i>		
glowing	<i>resplandecia</i>		
gouged	<i>escavar</i>		
gravel	<i>cascalho</i>		
grubby	<i>sujo</i>		
marbles	<i>berlindes</i>		
milch cows	<i>vacas leiteiras</i>		
moth	<i>traça</i>		
mottled	<i>manchada</i>		
plummeted	<i>baixaram</i>		
puffs	<i>baforadas</i>		
pungent	<i>pungente, acre</i>		
running amok	<i>perder as estribeiras</i>		
rut	<i>buraco</i>		
sarong	<i>vestimenta, tipo saia para homem e mulher</i>		
serfdom	<i>servidão feudal</i>		
serving in his turn	<i>a sua vez de ajudar</i>		
shoved	<i>enfiada</i>		
shutters	<i>portadas</i>		
Sinhala	<i>língua falada no Sri Lanka</i>		
slats	<i>tabuinhas</i>		
smudged	<i>manchado</i>		
snorted	<i>resfolegou</i>		
staining	<i>pintura</i>		
stalking	<i>a passear a passo largo</i>		