

8 Conditionals / Wishes / Unreal Past



Wishes

	Form	Use
I wish (if only) (wish/regret about the present)	+ Past tense	wish/regret about a present situation we want to be different
<i>I wish you worked more efficiently. (It's a pity you don't work more efficiently.)</i>		
I wish (if only) (wish/regret about the present)	+ could + bare infinitive	wish/regret in the present concerning lack of ability
<i>I wish I could drive a car. (But I can't.)</i>		
I wish (if only) (regret about the past)	+ Past Perfect	regret that something happened or didn't happen in the past
<i>I wish I had attended the seminar last Monday. (But I didn't. It's a pity I didn't attend it.)</i>		
I wish (if only) (impossible wish for a future change)	+ subject + would + bare inf (a. "wish" and "would" should have different subjects. We never say: I wish I would , He wishes he would etc b. wish + inanimate subject + would is used to express the speaker's lack of hope or disappointment)	wish for a future change unlikely to happen or wish to express dissatisfaction; polite request implying dissatisfaction or lack of hope
<i>I wish he would drive more carefully. (But I don't think he will. - wish for a future change unlikely to happen)</i>		
<i>I wish the children would be more co-operative. (The children have refused to co-operate. - dissatisfaction)</i>		
<i>I wish you would be more patient with Jim. (Please be more patient with him! - request implying lack of hope)</i>		
<i>I wish it would stop raining. (But I'm afraid it won't stop raining. - wish implying disappointment)</i>		

- In wishes, we go one tense back. This means that we use the Past Simple in the present or the Past Perfect in the past. *He's ill. He wishes he **weren't** ill. (present)*
*I overslept yesterday. I wish I **hadn't overslept** yesterday. (past)*
- After **I wish** we can use **were** instead of **was** in all persons. *I wish I **was/were** richer.*
- **If only** means the same as **I wish** but it is more dramatic. *If only I **was/were** richer.*

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267 Read what Irene says, then write what she wishes as in the example:

It rains all the time. I went camping and I regret it. The tent leaks; I didn't buy a new tent. I'm going to catch a cold. I can't see my friends. I feel lonely. I wasted my holidays here.

1I wish it would stop
.....raining all the time.....

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268 Fill in the gaps with an appropriate auxiliary verb.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 She can't type but she wishes she ... <i>could</i> | 10 They haven't got any children but they wish they |
| 2 They didn't buy the antique vase but they wish they | 11 I didn't see the programme but I wish I |
| 3 I'm not going to the concert but I wish I | 12 She's not qualified enough for the job but she wishes she |
| 4 I'm not very tall but I wish I | 13 He can't afford to buy her a diamond ring but he wishes he |
| 5 I didn't go to the meeting but I wish I | 14 I don't live close to the office, but I wish I |
| 6 I can't tell him the truth but I wish I | 15 She hasn't got a fax machine but she wishes she |
| 7 I don't earn much money but I wish I | |
| 8 He probably won't listen but I wish he | |
| 9 She won't accept help but I wish she | |

269 Put the verbs in brackets into the correct tense.

Dear Beth,

*I'm so desperate. I wish I 1) ...**hadn't moved**... (not/move) to this place. It's not a bad place but it's so quiet. If only there 2) (be) more people here my age, then I wouldn't feel so lonely. Even better, I wish my friends 3) (move) here from town. I thought I would enjoy the quiet life of the village but now I wish there 4) (be) some roads nearby so I could hear the traffic. I wish I 5) (afford) to move back to town but I don't have the money. Maybe it's the weather. I wish it 6) (stop) raining so at least I could go for long walks in the fields. Sometimes, when I'm really sad, I wish the village 7) (disappear) or my house 8) (collapse) so that I'd have to move. Maybe it will get better. If only I 9) (be) more patient. I wish I 10) (write) a more cheerful letter. It's made me even sadder. I look forward to hearing from you with some suggestions.*

*Best wishes,
Steve*

270 Complete the following sentences using the words in bold.

- 1 She would have stayed longer, but the babysitter needed to leave at 9.00.
not If the babysitter **had not needed to leave**..... at 9.00, she would have stayed longer.
- 2 We stopped at the service station. Otherwise, we would have run out of petrol.
not If at the service station, we would have run out of petrol.

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- 3 Tim couldn't have found the treasure without the map.
for But Tim couldn't have found the treasure.
- 4 I would have bought you a present but I didn't know that it was your birthday.
wish I it was your birthday; I would have bought you a present.
- 5 I grabbed his hand. Otherwise, he might have run into the road.
case I grabbed his hand into the road.
- 6 It's a pity I didn't read that book.
wish I that book.
- 7 Ann can organise the concert but somebody must help her.
helps Only if somebody the concert.
- 8 Helen would have lent you the money but you didn't ask her.
asked If she would have lent you the money.
- 9 I didn't finish my assignment because I came down with a terrible cold.
would If I hadn't come down with a terrible cold, my assignment.
- 10 I learnt to swim because you encouraged me.
never I to swim if you hadn't encouraged me.
- 11 Lee didn't drive me to the airport and as a result I missed my flight.
wish I me to the airport; I wouldn't have missed my flight.
- 12 Kate will move to London but she must find a job first.
finds Only if Kate move to London.
- 13 You can't lose weight without doing some exercise.
not Unless you do some exercise, weight.

271 Put the verbs in brackets into the appropriate form.

The young reporter walked up to the table where Dora Spangle was sitting and introduced himself. "Miss Spangle, I'm Dan Quaid from 'Star International'." The actress smiled up at him charmingly. "If I 1) *had known*... (know) you were so good-looking, I'd have put on some more make-up," she said. "You're too kind," laughed Dan. "You 2) (not/say) that if you had seen me at 7 o'clock this morning!" "Probably not," agreed Dora. "Now, I have to go in ten minutes. So, if I were you, I 3) (start) asking your questions." "Very well. Do you have any regrets about retiring from acting?" asked Dan. "Not about retiring," she replied. "But I do wish I 4) (play) the role of Cleopatra just once in my career." "If someone 5) (offer) you the part now, would you take it?" "No, it's too late now. I've decided to retire and that's final." "What 6) (you/do) if you get bored?" "Oh, there's no chance of that," she assured him. "I might get bored if I 7) (not/have) all my animals to look after, though." "Do you ever wish you 8) (marry)?" Dan asked. "Not really," she replied. "Although I probably 9) (marry) John Rogers if he had asked me," she added sadly. "What if ...?" "I'm sorry," Dora interrupted. "I really must go now. It's time to feed my dogs and they get very upset if I 10) (be) late."



272 Write sentences as in the example:

- 1 You want to visit Australia but you're frightened of flying.
...I wish I weren't frightened of flying. If I weren't frightened of flying, I could/would visit Australia.
- 2 You wanted to go to the theatre but you couldn't find any tickets anywhere.
- 3 You wanted to ring Kelly but you lost her phone number.
- 4 You want to make a coffee but you've run out.
- 5 You want to go swimming but it's too cold.
- 6 You went on holiday; your camera was stolen.