



UNIT 8a Grammar: Wishes - Unreal Past

Form

I **wish** (If only) + past simple
*I wish he **were**/was here now.*

I **wish** (If only) + past perfect
*If only he **had behaved** himself at the party last night!*

I **wish** (If only) + subject + would + present infinitive
We never say: ~~I wish I would~~
*I wish he **would stop** lying. (I'm fed up with his lies.)*
*I wish you **would help** me. (Please, help me.)*

I **wish** (If only) + subject + could + present infinitive
*I wish I **could speak** French.*

I **wish** (If only) + inanimate subject + would + present infinitive
*If only it **would stop** raining.*

Use

regret about a present situation which is unreal, impossible or unlikely

regret about a past situation

complaint/regret about the present; willingness, request; wish about sth not likely to happen; unwillingness; insistence

regret about present or future situation caused by lack of ability

a wish for a change in the future which is not likely to happen

Remember that after *wish* or *if only* we go one tense *back*. This means that we use *Simple Past* to refer to the present and *Past Perfect* to refer to the past.

Notes

- *Wish* expresses a hypothetical desire, *if only* expresses regret or strong desire. Both *wish* and *if only* can be used interchangeably, but *wish* is used for something that may happen, whereas *if only* is used to express that what is wished does not exist.
*I wish she **wasn't/weren't** always late.*
*If only I **knew** what to do!*
- *Wish* + infinitive = want to (formal).
*I wish **to be informed** of all the details. (I want to be informed of all the details.)*
- *Wish* + personal object + object is used in some fixed expressions of good wishes.
*I wish you **all the best**.*
- We use **hope** instead of **wish** for wishes about things that are likely to happen.
*I **hope** you get the job. (NOT: I ~~wish~~ you would get the job).*

1 Write a wish for each of the following sentences.

- 1 You want to go on holiday this summer, but you haven't got any leave left.
.....
.....
- 2 You neglected to have your clothes dry-cleaned.
.....
.....
- 3 Louise realised she left her lecture notes at home.
.....
.....
- 4 Tim didn't have enough time to go to the bank during his lunch hour.
.....
.....
- 5 It was unusually cold, so we couldn't go to the beach.
.....
.....

- 6 Mathilda wanted to be auditioned for the National Ballet.
.....
.....
- 7 You didn't put the ice cream in the fridge and now it's spoilt.
.....
.....
- 8 You didn't do mathematics in high school and now you regret it.
.....
.....
- 9 It didn't occur to you to take wet weather gear on your walking tour in Scotland and now you're drenched.
.....
.....

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- 10 Your best friend won't lend you her white silk dress because last time you spilt coffee on it.

.....

- 11 Theresa's dog keeps the neighbours awake because it barks all night.

.....

- 12 You have lost your reference from one of your previous jobs and now you need it for an interview.

.....

- 13 Dina gets cross because there is a lot of traffic in the street where she lives.

.....

- 14 You and your next door neighbour had an argument and now he won't speak to you.

.....

- 15 Adrienne saw a beautiful winter coat but it cost one month's pay.

.....

STRUCTURAL CONVERSION

- 1 *I wish I hadn't read the letter.*
If only I hadn't read the letter.
I regret reading/having read the letter.
I'm sorry I read the letter.
It's a pity I read the letter.

- 2 *"I wish he would be more patient," she said.*
She complained that he wasn't patient.
She complained that he was impatient.

- 3 *I would love to travel abroad.*
If only I could travel abroad.
I wish I could travel abroad.

- 4 *Why don't you drive more carefully?*
I wish you would drive more carefully.
Please drive more carefully.
I'd rather you drove more carefully.
You'd better drive more carefully.
It's time you started driving more carefully.
You would be better off driving more carefully.

- 5 *It's a pity I am not wealthy.*
I wish I were wealthy.
If only I were wealthy.

- 6 *I want to see you in my office.*
I wish to see you in my office.

- 2 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and eight words, including the word given.

- 1 Please, stop talking because I can't concentrate on the film.
quiet
 I
 I can't concentrate on the film.

- 2 Why don't you show me your stamp collection?
let
 I
 your stamp collection.

- 3 You look tired. Why don't you go to bed early tonight?
better
 You
 you look tired.

- 4 Zoe has a job which makes her feel very stressed.
less
 Zoe
 job.

- 5 Meg wants to be left alone because she's upset.
rather
 Meg
 she's upset.

- 6 I regret having committed myself to so many private lessons in the evenings.
not
 If
 private lessons in the evenings.

- 7 He regrets not taking her threats of leaving him seriously.
wishes
 He
 of leaving him seriously.

- 8 I would love to go on a round-the-world trip.
able
 I
 round-the-world trip.

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CONVERSATIONAL GRAMMAR

3 Choose the correct item.

0 If only I then what I know now!

- (A) had known C could know
B knew D was known

1 "It's time you in bed. It's almost midnight, isn't it?"

"You're right."

- A are C had been
B have been D were

2 "That trip was a nightmare."

"Yes, I wish we"

- A went C hadn't gone
B have gone D go

3 "I overslept and was late for work again!"

"You'd that clock fixed; it hasn't worked for over a week now."

- A rather have C better have
B better to have D rather had

4 "You missed an exciting start to the football match."

"Yes, it's a pity I on time."

- A am not C wasn't
B haven't been D hadn't been

5 If only I the bill; we wouldn't have been cut off.

- A paid C had been paid
B have paid D had paid

6 "I shouldn't have missed Mary's party."

"It's a pity you; we had a lovely time."

- A haven't come C weren't coming
B didn't come D hadn't come

7 He regrets enough time to finish the exercises.

- A not to have C not having
B not have had D to not have

8 "Do you mind if I tell Mary about your trip?"

"Well, I'd rather you anyone else about it."

- A wouldn't tell C not to tell
B didn't tell D haven't told

9 "You're looking tired."

"I'm exhausted. I wish my neighbours loud music when I'm trying to sleep."

- A haven't played C won't play
B wouldn't play D hadn't played

UNREAL PAST

We can use the *past simple* to talk about imaginary, unreal or improbable situations in the present, and *past perfect* when we refer to imaginary, unreal or improbable situations in the past. This use of the past tenses is called *unreal past*.

Past Simple

- conditional type 2
*If I **were** you, I would resign.*
- wishes (present)
*I wish I **were** in London.*
- I'd rather/sooner sb ... (for present situations)
*I'd sooner you **answered** me **now**.*
- suppose/supposing
*Suppose you **were** fired, what would you do?*
- as if/as though
*He behaves as if he **owned** the place!*
- It's (about/high) time...
*It's time we **left**.*

Past Perfect

- conditional type 3
*If I **had been told** earlier, I **wouldn't** have acted this way.*
- wishes (past)
*If only you **hadn't ruined** my dress!*
- I'd rather/sooner sb ... (for past situations)
*I'd rather he **hadn't behaved** like that **last night**.*
- suppose/supposing
*Suppose you **had lost** all your money?*
- as if/as though (when the action of the as if - clause has happened earlier than the action of the main clause)
*He looked as if he **had won** the pools!*

Notes

- *Suppose* can be followed by a verb in the present tense to express a situation which may happen in the future or to introduce suggestions.
*Suppose he **isn't** at work, where shall we find him?*
*"We haven't got any Coke." "Suppose we **drink** lemonade instead."*
- *As if/as though* can also be used with perfect tenses to express a real comparison.
*The cottage looks as if it **has been renovated**. (It probably has).*

WOULD RATHER = I'D PREFER

when the subject of *would rather* is also the subject of the following verb

I'd rather + present bare infinitive (present/future reference)
 I'd rather + perfect bare infinitive (past reference)

*I'd rather **have** fish for lunch. I like it a lot.*

*I'd rather **have told** him before. He wouldn't have been angry with me.*

when the subject of *would rather* is different from the subject of the following verb

I'd rather + past simple (present/future)
 I'd rather + past perfect (past)

*I'd rather you **left** before the guests arrive. They'll be here soon.*

*I'd rather they **had left** earlier. They wouldn't have missed their flight.*

HAD BETTER = SHOULD

I had better + present bare infinitive (present/future)

*We had better **cut down on** fats. (=We should cut down on fats.)*

It would have been better if + Past Perfect (past)

*It would have been better if you **hadn't behaved** impolitely.*

Notes

- prefer + gerund/noun + to + gerund/noun (general)
*I prefer **orange juice** to tomato juice.*
*I prefer **swimming** to climbing.*
- prefer + full infinitive + rather than + bare infinitive (general)
*I prefer **to travel** by car **rather than** (travel) by coach.*
- would prefer + full infinitive + rather than + bare infinitive (specific)
*I'd prefer **to have** apple pie **rather than** have spinach pie.*
- would rather + bare infinitive + than + bare infinitive (general or specific)
*I'd rather **sleep** than watch TV.*

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CONVERSATIONAL GRAMMAR

4 Choose the correct item.

- 1 "It's a pity Sarah is still unemployed."
"Yes, if only she university."
A would have finished C would finish
B had finished D finishes
- 2 I wish I their help when it was offered.
A would accept C had accepted
B have accepted D accepted
- 3 Suppose she that outrageous story
circulating around the office; she'd be furious!
A has heard C were heard
B would hear D had heard
- 4 "Susan looks ready to cry".
"It looks as if Peter her birthday again!"
A had been forgetting C has been forgetting
B had forgotten D has forgotten
- 5 "Why are you glaring at me?"
"You treat me as if I your slave."
A were C have been
B was being D had been
- 6 I'd rather you the deal in writing by the end
of next week.
A confirmed C had confirmed
B have confirmed D confirm
- 7 "You're looking rather pleased with yourself."
"Suppose your boss you a big bonus, you
would too."
A had offered C would offer
B has been offering D had been offered
- 8 It's time you about your future.
A to think C thought
B had thought D think
- 9 If only she to her principles, she wouldn't
have been led astray.
A sticks C had stuck
B stuck D have stuck
- 10 "I can't think of a good excuse for being late."
"You be honest and tell the truth."
A had better C would have been
 better
B would better D had better to

STRUCTURAL CONVERSION

- 1 *If you don't tell the truth, he'll punish you.*
You'd better tell the truth or else he'll punish you.
- 2 *If I were you, I would accept his proposal.*
You should accept his proposal.
You'd better accept his proposal.
- 3 *"You'd better take a nap," Mother said.*
Mother advised me to take a nap.
- 4 *"You shouldn't be rude to her," he said to me.*
He advised me not to be rude to her.
He suggested that I shouldn't be rude to her.
- 5 *They asked for a spare key. Why didn't you give them one?*
They asked for a spare key. You should have given them one.
- 6 *There'll be trouble if he behaves like that again.*
He'd better not behave like that again or (else) there will be trouble.
- 7 *Why didn't you tell him so?*
It would have been better if you had told him so.
If I were you, I would have told him so.
I'd rather/sooner you had told him so.
I wish you had told him so.
- 8 *I'd rather watch TV than listen to music.*
I prefer (watching) TV to (listening to) music.
- 9 *I'd rather stay indoors than go to the party.*
I'd prefer to stay indoors rather than go to the party.
- 10 *I prefer to play tennis rather than play polo.*
I'd rather play tennis than (play) polo.
I'd sooner play tennis than (play) polo.
- 11 *I'd rather you left now.*
I'd prefer you to leave now.
- 12 *It's time you learnt how to cook.*
It's time for you to learn how to cook.
You should learn how to cook.
You must learn how to cook.

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5 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and eight words, including the word given.

- 1 Why didn't you take the day off work?

better

It the day off work.

- 2 "You'd better tidy your desk" he said.

to

He desk.

- 3 He'd rather eat with friends than eat alone.

prefers

He alone.

- 4 If we don't leave now, we won't catch the train.

or

We'd catch the train.

- 5 It's time you started learning French.

for

It's lessons.

- 6 I prefer to go by car rather than go by coach.

sooner

I by coach.

- 7 You really should learn to drive.

high

It's to drive.

- 8 I'd prefer you to do the washing-up now.

rather

I'd now.

CONVERSATIONAL GRAMMAR

6 Choose the correct item.

- 1 She's such a snob; she behaves the Queen.

A as if she has been C as if she were
B like she were D like she was

- 2 "Have I done something wrong?"

"I wish you more tactful; you're always offending people."

A were C were being
B have been D had been being

- 3 I'd rather you a noise last night; I couldn't get to sleep.

A wouldn't make C didn't make
B hadn't made D haven't made

- 4 If only we more people, then we wouldn't be feeling so lonely.

A had known C have know
B knew D were known

- 5 It's high time you the balcony. It's covered in leaves and dust.

A cleaned C had cleaned
B to be cleaned D to have cleaned

- 6 "My washing machine is about to break down."

"If I were you, a new one."

A I'd bought C I'll buy
B I bought D I'd buy

- 7 If only they their tickets; I've got two spare ones.

A didn't buy C wouldn't buy
B hadn't bought D haven't bought

- 8 If John the train instead of driving, he wouldn't have been late for work.

A would catch C caught
B should catch D had caught

- 9 Suppose the stock market how much money would we have lost?

A had crashed C has crashed
B crash D would crash

- 10 Sally would prefer to pursue her studies to look for a job.

A rather than start C rather than starting
B to starting D than to start