

WISH / IF ONLY EXPRESSING REGRETS, DESIRES, AND COMPLAINTS

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QUICK QUESTIONS

let's start!

- If you could change one thing about your week, what would it be?
- Is there anything you regret not doing last year?
- What do you wish you were doing right now?
- Is there a mistake you've learned from recently?

IMAGE-BASED PROMPTS

- What do you think happened here?
- What do you think this person is wishing or regretting?



HOW AND WHY WE USE WISH / IF ONLY

Purpose

We use “wish” and “if only” to talk about:

- Regrets about the past
- Unreal or impossible situations in the present
- Things we want to change or complain about in the future

📌 These are not real situations – they express something we want to be different.

✨ Key Point:

After wish and if only, the verb tense goes one step back in time.

Why? → Because we’re talking about unreal or hypothetical situations.

PRESENTATION: FORM + MEANING

Elicit or Introduce the Structure

✓ 1. Wish + Past Simple (present regrets / unreal present)

- I wish I knew how to dance. (I don't know now.)
- She wishes she lived closer. (She doesn't.)

↻ Similar to 2nd conditional.

👉 Form: wish + past simple

🧱 Common verbs: was/were, had, knew, lived, spoke

✓ 2. Wish + Past Perfect (regrets about the past)

- I wish I hadn't eaten so much.
- He wishes he had studied medicine.

👉 Form: wish + had + past participle

Used for real past regrets / actions we can't change

PRESENTATION: FORM + MEANING

Elicit or Introduce the Structure

✅ 3. Wish + Would (annoyance / desire for change)

- I wish you would listen to me.
- She wishes it wouldn't rain so often.

👉 Form: wish + would + base verb

Used to complain about people/things we can't control or want to change.

📎 Note: You can't use "would" for your own actions:

🛑 I wish I would go → ❌

✅ I wish I could go / I wish I went

HOW AND WHY WE USE WISH / IF ONLY

Times

- 💡 Function
- 💭 Unreal Present / Future
- 😞 Regret about the Past
- 😡 Desire to change something

- 🕒 Time Reference
 - Now / future
 - Completed past actions
 - Future / annoying habits

- 🔧 Structure
 - wish + past simple
 - wish + past perfect
 - wish + would + base verb

- 💬 Example
 - I wish I had more money.(= I don't.)
 - She wishes she hadn't said that.
 - I wish he would stop complaining.

HOW AND WHY WE USE WISH / IF ONLY

Wish + Past simple

◆ A. Wishes about the Present

Used for things we want to be different now.

- Form: wish / if only + past simple
- Examples:
 - "I wish I had more free time."
 - "If only I lived in a warmer country."

🔍 Note: Use "were" for all subjects in formal English (I wish I were taller).

HOW AND WHY WE USE WISH / IF ONLY

Wish + Past Perfect

👉 To talk about regrets about the past – things you did or didn't do, and now you're sorry.

🗣️ "I wish I hadn't eaten so much pizza."

- Reality: I did eat too much.
- Regret → use past perfect.

"Is there anything you regret doing last weekend?"

→ I wish I had gone to the gym.

→ I wish I had studied more for the test.

HOW AND WHY WE USE WISH / IF ONLY

Wish + Past Perfect

◆ B. Wishes about the Past

Used for regrets about things that happened (or didn't happen).

- Form: wish / if only + past perfect
- Examples:
 - "I wish I had studied medicine."
 - "If only I hadn't eaten so much cake."

🧠 Past perfect = had + past participle

HOW AND WHY WE USE WISH / IF ONLY

Wish + would

3. Wish + Would

👉 To express annoyance or a desire for something to change in the future – usually about other people or things you can't control.

🗣️ "I wish it would stop raining."

- Reality: It's still raining.
- You're annoyed → use wish + would.

"What's something you wish other people would stop doing?"

→ I wish my neighbor would stop playing loud music.

→ I wish people wouldn't use their phones during dinner.

📌 Rule: We don't normally use "would" for ourselves.

❌ I wish I would go to bed earlier. → ❌

✅ I wish I went to bed earlier. → ✅

✅ Tips:

- "wish" = a softer, polite or emotional way to say "I don't like this" or "I regret this"
- "if only" = stronger, more dramatic version (interchangeable in most cases)

HOW AND WHY WE USE WISH / IF ONLY

Wish + would

◆ C. Wishes about the Future / Complaints

Used for:

- Things we want to change about the future
- Complaints (especially about other people)
- Form: wish + would / could + base verb
- Examples:
 - "I wish it would stop raining."
 - "I wish she would stop texting during dinner."
 - "I wish I could go on holiday."

⚠ We use "would" for other people/things — not for ourselves.

PRACTICE

 **Instructions: Each sentence contains an error. Correct it.**

- I wish I would have studied medicine.
- If only she goes to the party, she'll feel better.
- I wish I don't have to work tomorrow.
- He wishes he wouldn't said that.
- If only I have more free time.
- I wish it stops raining soon.
- She wishes she has taken the job.
- I wish you be more patient.
- If only I would be taller!
- We wish we didn't forgot the tickets.

PRACTICE

 **Instructions: Complete the sentence in a way that's true for you. Use your own ideas.**

- I wish I knew how to...
- If only I had remembered to...
- I wish people would stop...
- I wish I hadn't...
- If only I lived...
- I wish it wouldn't...
- I wish I had taken the chance to...
- If only I could...
- I wish my [family/friend/partner] would...
- I wish I were better at...