

WISH & IF ONLY

B2 | Teens / Adults | Grammar Practice | 35-45 minutes

Learn and practise | Express unreal present wishes, past regrets and desired changes.

1. READ: Noisy building work

Read the conversation. Notice the bold grammar and how the speakers use it.

Leah: The drilling has started again.

Matt: I **wish I had** somewhere quieter to work.

Leah: Could you go to the library?

Matt: Maybe. **If only I'd checked** the building schedule before booking this room.

Leah: I **wish they'd stop** for lunch. It's been going on all morning.

Matt: Let's ask reception when it ends. There's no point waiting here all day.

2. GRAMMAR: Wishes about now, then and change

Use wish/if only + past for now, past perfect for regrets, and would for a desired change.

Use / form	Pattern	Example
Unreal now	wish + past simple	I wish I had a quiet room.
Past regret	wish + past perfect	I wish I'd checked first.
Desired change	wish + would + verb	I wish they'd stop drilling.

Ability: I wish I could swim. **Be:** I wish I were taller (was is common informally).

If only often sounds stronger or more emotional than wish.

Use would for a wanted change, not a simple self-state: I wish I knew, not I wish I would know.

A. CHOOSE

Circle the correct option in each sentence.

1. I wish I have / had more time.
2. If only I checked / had checked yesterday.
3. I wish the neighbours will / would be quieter.
4. I wish I could / can drive.
5. She wishes she hadn't / wouldn't have gone.
6. I wish I knew / would know the answer.
7. If only the rain would stop / stops soon.
8. I wish I was / am taller.

Read each answer aloud. Explain which meaning or time clue helped you.

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Use it | Complete a context, write sentences and speak with a partner.

B. COMPLETE: Looking for a quieter room

Complete each sentence with the correct form of the words in brackets.

1. I wish this room _____ (be) quieter now.
2. If only I _____ (check) the schedule before booking.
3. I wish the builders _____ (stop) for a break soon.
4. I wish I _____ (can) work somewhere else today.
5. I wish I _____ (not / choose) this room yesterday.
6. If only I _____ (know) when the noise will end.

C. CHANGE THE SENTENCES

1-2: Begin with I wish.

Example: I don't know. **I wish I knew.**

1. I don't have more time.

2. I can't swim.

3-4: Express a past regret with If only. Example: I didn't ask. **If only I'd asked.**

3. I didn't book early.

4. I chose the wrong room.

D. WRITE ABOUT YOU

Write a present wish, a past regret and a desired change. Use three appropriate forms.

Example: **I wish I lived nearer. If only I'd left earlier. I wish the bus would come.**

E. SPEAK WITH A PARTNER

Discuss a small everyday frustration. Express a wish, then suggest a practical response.

Your partner asks which wishes concern now, the past or a change.

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Answer key | Keep this page separate during student practice.

1. READ: Noisy building work

Sample target language from the conversation:

Matt: I wish I had somewhere quieter to work.

Matt: Maybe. If only I'd checked the building schedule before booking this room.

Leah: I wish they'd stop for lunch. It's been going on all morning.

A. CHOOSE

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. had | 2. had checked |
| 3. would | 4. could |
| 5. hadn't | 6. knew |
| 7. would stop | 8. was (were also possible) |

B. COMPLETE: Looking for a quieter room

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. were / was | 2. had checked |
| 3. would stop | 4. could |
| 5. hadn't chosen / had not chosen | 6. knew |

C. CHANGE THE SENTENCES

1. I wish I had more time.
2. I wish I could swim.
3. If only I'd booked early.
4. If only I hadn't chosen the wrong room.

D. WRITE ABOUT YOU / E. SPEAK

Personal answers will vary. Check the target grammar.

Sample: I wish I had a garden. If only I'd saved more. I wish the council would plant more trees.

Teacher note: Accept was/were for unreal present be. Would often criticises repeated behaviour or asks for a change; it is not a general future marker after wish.