Wish / If only

Grammar practice · B2 · Answers on the last page.

THE RULE

wish / if only + past simple → a different present (unreal now).
I wish I had more time. · If only I knew the answer.

wish / if only + past perfect → a regret about the past.
I wish I had studied. · If only I hadn't said that.

wish / if only + would → annoyance or wanting a change (other people / things).
I wish you would listen. · If only it would stop raining.

Use *were* for all persons (I wish I were…) and *could* for ability. **If only** is more emphatic.

1 Present wishes — complete with the past simple.

1 I wish I _____ (have) more free time.

2 If only I _____ (know) the answer!

3 She wishes she _____ (be) a bit taller.

4 I wish I _____ (can) speak Chinese.

5 We wish we _____ (not live) so far from the beach.

6 If only he _____ (understand) how I feel.

2 Past regrets — complete with the past perfect.

1 I wish I _____ (study) harder for the exam.

2 If only I _____ (not say) that to her.

3 He wishes he _____ (buy) the house when it was cheap.

4 I wish I _____ (not spend) all my money.

5 If only they _____ (tell) us earlier!

6 She wishes she _____ (listen) to her parents.

3 Complaints & change — complete with would + verb.

1 I wish you _____ (stop) interrupting me.

2 If only it _____ (stop) raining!

3 I wish the neighbours _____ (not make) so much noise.

4 I wish my old computer _____ (work) properly.

5 I wish you _____ (not leave) your clothes everywhere.

4 Choose the correct form.

1 I wish I (have / had) a bigger house.

2 If only I (studied / had studied) medicine when I was young.

3 I wish it (stops / would stop) snowing.

4 She wishes she (was / had been) at the party last night.

5 I wish I (can / could) help you.

6 If only you (listen / would listen) to me!

5 Rewrite using wish or if only.

1 *I don't have a car. (I wish…)*

2 *I didn't go to university. (I wish…)*

3 *It's raining and I want it to stop. (I wish…)*

4 *I can't drive. (If only…)*

5 *I ate too much. (I wish…)*

Soluciones

Answer key.

1 · Present wishes

1 had 2 knew 3 were 4 could speak 5 didn't live 6 understood

2 · Past regrets

1 had studied 2 hadn't said 3 had bought 4 hadn't spent 5 had told 6 had listened

3 · Complaints & change (would)

1 would stop 2 would stop 3 wouldn't make 4 would work 5 wouldn't leave

4 · Choose

1 had 2 had studied 3 would stop 4 had been 5 could 6 would listen

5 · Rewrite

1 I wish I had a car.
2 I wish I had gone to university.
3 I wish it would stop raining.
4 If only I could drive.
5 I wish I hadn't eaten so much.