

Activity Type

Grammar and Writing Exercises: gap-fill, changing word forms, rewriting sentences, sentence completion, binary choice

Focus

I wish / If only

Past simple

Past perfect

Aim

To learn how to express present desires and past regrets with *I wish* and *If only*.

Preparation

Make one copy of the two-page worksheet for each student.

Level

Intermediate (B1)

Time

25 minutes

Introduction

This wishes and regrets worksheet can be used to introduce students to *I wish* and *If only* and how it is used to express present desires and past regrets.

Procedure

Give each student a copy of the two-page worksheet.

Students begin by reading how to use *I wish* and *If only* to talk about a present situation that you would like to be different.

Students then complete statements with verbs from a box in their past simple form.

Exercise A - Answer key

- | | | | |
|----------|-------------|----------|------------|
| 1. had | 3. fell | 5. were | 7. brought |
| 2. lived | 4. accepted | 6. owned | 8. knew |

Next, students change each sentence into a wish about the present using *I wish* and *If only*.

Exercise B - Answer key

1. I wish I were allowed to go on holiday with my friends.
2. If only I had a bigger TV.
3. I wish I lived in a palace.
4. If only I had curly hair.
5. I wish I looked more handsome.
6. If only I lived with my brother.

After that, student read how *I wish* and *If only* can be used to express regrets for past situations.

Students then complete regrets with the past perfect form of verbs in brackets.

Exercise C - Answer key

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. had woken up | 4. had bought |
| 2. had gone | 5. had done |
| 3. hadn't made | 6. had learned |

Students then move on to write about four things from their past that they regret using *I wish* and *If only*.

Finally, students read ten statements and decide if each one is about the present or past by underlining the answer in brackets.

Exercise D - Answer key

Present: 3, 4, 5, 7, 9 Past: 1, 2, 6, 8, 10

We use *I wish* or *If only* with the past simple when we want to talk about a present situation that we would like to be different.

Example: I wish / If only I were a millionaire. (I'm not a millionaire, but I want to be)

A. Complete the statements with the verbs from the box in their past simple form.

fall	bring	have	know	accept	be	live	own
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1. I wish I a different job. I don't like the one I have now.
2. If only I near the sea. I love to swim.
3. I wish Antonio in love with me. I like him so much.
4. If only Pedro my apology.
5. It's cold today. I wish it warmer.
6. If only I a boat. We could go sailing.
7. It looks like it's going to rain. If only I an umbrella.
8. I wish I the answer, but I don't.



B. Change each sentence into a wish about the present.

Example: I want to speak English fluently.

..... *I wish I spoke English fluently.*

1. I want to be allowed to go on holiday with my friends.

I wish

2. I want to have a bigger TV.

If only

3. I want to live in a palace.

I wish

4. I want to have curly hair.

If only

5. I want to look more handsome.

I wish

6. I want to live with my brother.

If only

We use *I wish* or *If only* with the past perfect when we talk about a situation in the past that we regret.

Example: I wish / If only I had taken that job as an actress many years ago.

C. Complete the regrets with the past perfect form of the verbs in brackets.

1. I wish I (wake up) early this morning because I was late for work.
2. If only I (go) to Greece for my last holiday.
3. I wish I (not make) so much food. Nobody ate it!
4. If only I (buy) a faster car. This one is too slow!
5. I wish I (do) my homework earlier.
6. If only I (learn) a second language as a child.

D. Now, write about four things from your past that you regret.

1. I wish
2. If only
3. I wish
4. If only

E. Read each statement and decide if it is about the present or past by underlining the answer in brackets.

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|--|------------------|
| 1. I wish I had taken a longer holiday. | (present / past) |
| 2. If only I had listened to my parents. | (present / past) |
| 3. I wish I were good at magic. | (present / past) |
| 4. If only I worked in the city. | (present / past) |
| 5. I wish I were better at cooking. | (present / past) |
| 6. If only I hadn't left my phone at the park. | (present / past) |
| 7. I wish I knew how to fix my computer. | (present / past) |
| 8. If only I had met my best friend years ago. | (present / past) |
| 9. I wish I were interested in sports. | (present / past) |
| 10. If only I had read more books as a child. | (present / past) |

