

wish / If only

Subject + wish...		+ past perfect > regrets about the past regret (n): <i>pesar, arrepentimiento</i> ; to regret (v): <i>lamentar</i>
If only... (more emphatic, stronger)	+ Subject	+ past > regrets about the present
		+ would > complaints: <i>quejas</i>

1 Regrets about the past. These people did something yesterday which they now regret. What does each person say? Use the Past Perfect, e.g.

Clare has caught a bad cold - yesterday she went out in the rain without an umbrella.

I wish/ If only I hadn't gone out in the rain without an umbrella.

- 1 Joe has got very bad sunburn - yesterday he stayed in the sun for long.
I
- 2 He's got an awful stomachache - yesterday he ate a lot.
I
- 3 Lewis hurt his leg in a car crash - yesterday he didn't drive carefully.
I
- 4 Sue has hurt her back - yesterday she lifted a heavy table on her own.
I

2 Regrets about the present. Use the Past to complete what the speaker says.

- 1 I'm so shy.
I wish
- 2 I don't know what to say to people.
.....
- 3 I find it so difficult to make friends.
.....
- 4 I'm not good-looking.
.....
- 5 My ears are so big.
If only

3 Complaints. Complete these people's complaints, using "would/ wouldn't".

- 1 A zoo keeper: "I wish people (feed) the animals."
- 2 A teacher: "I wish my students (do) their homework on time."
- 3 A hotel chambermaid: "If only guests (clean) the bath after they've used it."
- 4 A park keeper: "I wish people (pick) the flowers."
- 5 A street cleaner: "If only people (take) their litter home."

4 What would you say? Use "I wish.../ If only..."

1 You'd like the baby to stop crying because you're trying to sleep.

.....

2 It's a pity you can't swim.

.....

3 You don't like it when Jack leaves the door open.

.....

4 You have to work tomorrow but you'd like to stay in bed.

.....

5 You would like people to stop fighting.

.....

6 You're sorry you didn't bring your camera.

.....

7 It's a pity you didn't work harder during the term.

.....

8 You're sorry you didn't get a ticket for the concert.

.....

would rather

Subject + would rather/ sooner + Subject + <i>past</i> (= Subject + would prefer <i>someone</i> [not] to...)

5 You are speaking to a friend. Complete the sentences using "I'd rather you..." and a past form.

1 You could go now, but (stay) a bit longer.

2 This is a secret, so (not tell) anyone.

3 I could phone the hotel, but (phone) them.

4 (not turn on) the TV if you don't mind.

5 (not come) in the afternoon. I'll be quite busy then.

It's time

It's (high/ about) time + S + past

(used when someone should have already done something)

6 Make sentences with: "It's (high/ about) time..." or "Isn't it (high/ about) time...?" and a past form.

1 You haven't bought any new clothes for a long time.

.....

2 It's nearly lunch time, but Simon hasn't got up yet.

Don't you think it's

3 You promised to write to a friend three weeks ago.

.....

4 You haven't had a holiday for a long time.

.....

5 You haven't learnt to spell.

..... ?

7 Rewrite these sentences with the new beginnings.

1 If we want to arrive on time we should leave now.

It's time

2 What a pity he didn't spend more time revising.

If only

3 I should have learnt German at school!

I wish

4 I'd prefer to stay at home tonight if you don't mind.

I'd rather

5 Please don't interrupt me when I'm speaking.

I'd rather

6 We ought to find out how much it's going to cost.

It's time we

7 I've got so much to do today.

I wish

8 What a shame you didn't tell me earlier.

If only

KEY TO EXERCISES

- 1** 1. I wish I hadn't stayed in the sun so long. 2. I wish I'd eaten less. 3. I wish I'd driven more carefully. 4. I wish I hadn't tried to lift a heavy table on my own.
- 2** 1. ...I weren't so shy. 2. If only I knew what to say to people. 3. I wish I didn't find it so difficult to make friends. 4. I wish I were good-looking. 5. ...my ears weren't so big.
- 3** 1. ...wouldn't feed the animals. 2. ...would do their homework on time. 3. ...would clean the bath after they've used it. 4. ...wouldn't pick the flowers. 5. ...would take their litter home.
- 4** (Possible answers) 1. If only the baby would stop crying. 2. I wish I could swim. 3. I wish Jack wouldn't leave the door open. 4. If only I didn't have to work tomorrow. 5. If only people would stop fighting. 6. I wish I had brought my camera. 7. I wish I had worked harder during the term. 8. If only I had got a ticket for the concert.
- 5** 1. ...would rather you stayed a bit longer 2. ...I'd rather you didn't tell anyone 3. ...I'd rather you phoned them 4. I'd rather you didn't turn on ... 5. I'd rather you didn't come...
- 6** (Possible answers) 1. It's time I bought some new clothes. 2. ... time you got up? 3. It's time I wrote to him. 4. It's time I had a holiday. 5. Isn't it time I learnt to spell?
- 7** 1. ...we left if we want to arrive on time. 2. ...he had spent more time revising. 3. ...I had learnt German at school. 4. ...stay at home tonight if you don't mind. 5. ...you didn't interrupt me when I'm speaking. 6. ...found out how much it's going to cost. 7. ...I didn't have so much to do today. 8. ...you had told me earlier.