

Girlfriend: OK, well, if you're not coming, you can at least wish me good luck!

Boyfriend: If only I could come. I really wish I didn't have this meeting tonight. But you know how it is – I have to go. If only you'd told me about it earlier, I could have asked Bob to go in my place.

Girlfriend: I wish you'd stop lying! I know you hate these things. If only you'd be honest about it for once!

## Presentation

Use *wish* and *if only* to talk about regrets and to describe an imaginary situation which is the opposite of the real situation.

### Past simple

Use the past simple to talk about present or future situations using a stative verb:

*I wish / If only I **had** more time.* (But I don't have time.)

*I wish / If only I **wasn't** / **weren't**\* so busy.* (But I am very busy.)

\*You can use *was* or *were* with *I*, *he*, *she* and *it*. *Were* is more formal.

### could

Use *could* to talk about abilities and possibilities:

*I wish / If only I **could** read.* (but I can't read)

*I wish / If only I **could** come with you.* (but I can't)

### would

Use *would* to talk about a desire for someone to do something differently or for a situation to be different. You often use *would* to talk about another person's annoying habits or an annoying situation:

*I wish / If only you **wouldn't** do that.* (but you insist on doing that annoying thing.)

*I wish / If only you'd stop worrying.* (but you don't stop)

Notice that you cannot use the same subject in both clauses with *would*: *I wish I ~~wouldn't~~ work so hard.* ✗ (say *If only I didn't have to work so hard.*)

*I wish you **wouldn't** work so hard.* ✓

### Past continuous

Use the past continuous to talk about . . .

- actions in progress at the present time: *I wish / If only it **wasn't raining**.* (but it is raining)
- future plans and intentions: *I wish / If only I **wasn't working this evening**.* (but I am working this evening)

### Past perfect

Use the past perfect to talk about past situations:

*I wish / If only you'd **told** me about it earlier.* (but you didn't tell me)

*I wish / If only I **hadn't done** that.* (but I did)

## Exercises

### 1 Write the words in the correct order to make sentences.

- 1 I had wish more I money .....
- 2 if we late only hadn't arrived .....
- 3 I told wish me you'd earlier .....
- 4 if we could go only together .....
- 5 wouldn't I she work wish so late .....
- 6 only I living if wasn't so far away .....

### 2 Choose the correct options.

- 1 I wish I *knew* / *would know* how to play golf.
- 2 You speak Russian so beautifully. I wish I *could* / *would* speak Russian like you.
- 3 I wish you *came* / *were coming* to the party this evening.
- 4 This film is awful! I wish I *stayed* / *'d stayed* at home.
- 5 I wish they *aren't* / *weren't* coming. They always spoil my parties.
- 6 A: I'm bored!
- 7 B: I wish you *weren't saying* / *wouldn't say* that!

### 3 Look at the pictures and complete the people's thoughts using the verbs in brackets. Then listen and check.



- 1 I wish I .....  
(read) Japanese.



- 2 I wish it .....  
(be) so hot!



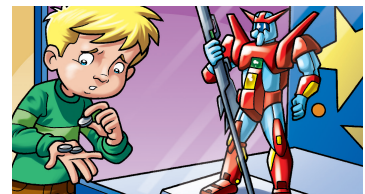
- 3 If only I .....  
(not/go) home tomorrow.



- 4 If only I .....  
(bring) my umbrella.



- 5 I wish you .....  
(bite) your nails all the time!



- 6 If only I .....  
(have) enough money.

### 4 Complete the sentences so that they are true for you.

- 1 I wish I were .....
- 2 I wish I could .....
- 3 If only I wasn't ..... tomorrow.
- 4 If only I hadn't .....