

14

Style (2)

I wish & unreal conditionals

I wish

You can use *I wish* to talk about unreal situations. After *I wish*, you backshift the tense. Note that after *I*, you can use *were* and *weren't* instead of *was* and *wasn't*, especially in writing.

fact	wish	wish
I am a teacher.	I wish I wasn't/weren't a teacher.	I wish I was/were a doctor.
I live in New York.	I wish I didn't live in New York.	I wish I lived in Paris.
I am studying English.	I wish I wasn't studying English.	I wish I was studying Chinese.
I forgot my camera.	I wish I hadn't forgotten it	I wish I d brought it with me.

Unreal conditionals

When you use *if* for unreal conditionals, you use the same tense backshifting rules as you do with *I wish*.

fact	if
I am not a doctor	If I was/were a doctor...
I don't live in Paris.	If I lived in Paris...
I am not studying Chinese.	If I was/were studying Chinese...
I forgot my camera.	If I hadn't forgotten my camera...

In the second clause of the sentence you normally use *would*. In speech you usually contract this to *'d*. You can also use *might* or *maybe + would* for possible results. Note that there is normally a comma after the *'if'* clause.

If I **was** a doctor, I **d be able to help** people, and **maybe I'd earn** more.
 If I **lived** in Paris, I **d visit** the Louvre every day, and I **d have** croissants and coffee for breakfast in a pavement café.
 If I **were studying** Chinese, I **d have** fewer problems with grammar. And I **might be able to study** in China for a year.
 If I **hadn't forgotten** my camera, I **would have taken** some photos of the sunset.

You can put the main clause before the *'if'* clause. When you do this, there is normally no comma between the two clauses.

I'd be able to help people if I was a doctor.
 Maybe I'd earn more if I were a doctor.

Here are some useful conditional phrases.

If only I could, I'd fly to New York tomorrow.
If I had the time, I'd learn a musical instrument.
It wouldn't surprise me if I ran out of petrol before we get there.
If I were you, I'd be more careful the next time.
If I had the chance, I'd spend my whole life learning new things.
If I had the money, I'd travel around the world.

14 (2) Practice

1 Oliver doesn't like some things in his life. Complete his wishes.

- I live in London.
I wish I didn't live in London.
- I can't afford to move to a nicer area.

- I haven't got a car.

- I don't know many people.
_____ more people.
- It rains all the time.

- It's raining now.

- I don't have much money.

- My job is so boring.

- It's not the weekend.

2 Write four wishes of your own. For example, *I wish I could play the drums.*

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

3 Complete the sentences putting the verbs into an appropriate tense

- If I had the money, I 'd wear expensive clothes all the time. *have wear*
- If only I _____, I _____ work tomorrow. *can give up*
- I _____ tonight, if I _____ so much work to do. *go out not have*
- I _____ to live in the UK, if the weather _____ better. *love was*
- If I _____ more money, I _____ so poor all the time. *earn not be*

4 Complete the dialogues using *I wish I...* and *If I were you, I'd...* and the verb pairs in the box.

can/join can/talk enjoy/think have/get

- I wish I could give up smoking.
If I were you, I'd talk to my brother - he's stopped.
- _____ my job a bit more.
_____ about looking for a new one.
- _____ a bit more money.
_____ a part-time job.
- _____ speak better English.
_____ an English course.

5 Here are some useful conditional phrases. Complete them so they are true for you. For example, *If only I could, I'd go to the beach this afternoon. It wouldn't surprise me if Brazil won the next World Cup.*

- If only I could, I'd _____
- If I had the time, I'd _____
- It wouldn't surprise me if _____
- If I were you, I'd _____
- If I had the chance, I'd _____
- If I had the money, I'd _____

6 Complete these famous quotations with the words in the box. Which quote do you like the best?

didn't had had done

- There are a lot of things I wish I _____, instead of just sitting around and complaining about having a boring life.
(Kurt Cobain, rock musician)
- I wish I _____ a twin, so I could know what I'd look like without plastic surgery.
(Joan Rivers, comedienne)
- Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we _____.
(Erica Jong, author)

I wish & if only

I wish and *if only* are two ways of talking about unreal situations. You can use them to express regrets about the present or past. When you use *I wish* and *if only* to talk about unreal situations, you normally backshift the tense of the verb that follows.

Present changes to past

I **live** in Oxford

I wish I **lived** in Rome.

I wish I **didn't live** in Oxford.

I **don't know** the answer.

I wish I **knew** it.

I'm **going** to the cinema with Pete.

I wish I **was/were going** with Miguel. I wish I **wasn't/weren't going** with Pete.

I **feel** so tired.

If only I **didn't feel** so tired.

He's a very difficult person to like.

If only he **wasn't/weren't** so difficult.

Past changes to past perfect

I **studied** economics.

I wish I'd **studied** Italian literature.

I wish I **hadn't studied** economics.

I **went to** Scotland for my holidays.

I wish I'd **gone** to Spain.

I wish I **hadn't gone** to Scotland.

There **wasn't** enough time.

I wish there'd **been** more time.

I **started** smoking as a teenager.

If only I **hadn't started** smoking.

I **didn't know** you were coming today.

If only I'd **known** you were coming.

He **told** her a lot of lies.

If only he **hadn't told** her so many lies.

Be going to* changes to *was/were going to

They're **going to** close the factory.

I wish they **weren't going to** close it.

I'm **going to** study all day.

I wish I **wasn't/weren't going to study** so much.

It's **going to cost** a lot.

If only it **wasn't going to cost** so much.

Can* changes to *could

I **can't speak** English as well as you.

I wish I **could speak** it better..

I **can't stop** smoking.

If only I **could stop** smoking.

***Have to* changes to *had to* or *didn't have to*.**

I **have to leave** in five minutes.

I wish I **didn't have to leave** so soon.

I **have to wear** a suit at work.

If only I **didn't have to wear** a suit.

Will* changes to *would

No one **will meet** me at the station.

I wish someone **would meet** me at the station.

They **won't choose** me for the team.

I wish they **would choose** me for the team.

15 (1) Practice

1 Look at the pictures and complete what the people are thinking. Use *I wish* and the verbs in the box.



can ~~knew~~ stay be speak

- a) I wish I knew more people.
- b) _____ someone _____ to me.
- c) _____ dance.
- d) _____ the music _____ better.
- e) _____ at home.



bring not/rain live watch

- f) _____ today.
- g) _____ my umbrella.
- h) _____ the weather forecast.
- i) _____ somewhere else.



be not/be do play

- j) _____ the lesson _____ more interesting.
- k) _____ my homework last night.
- l) _____ here.
- m) _____ basketball outside.

2 Complete the second sentence using the word or words given so the meaning is similar.

- a) I regret drinking so much last night. *wish*
I wish I hadn't drunk so much last night.
- b) You really should've told me earlier. *if only*

- c) It's a pity we don't live nearer to each other
wish

- d) It's a pity Anna's feeling unwell. *if only*

- e) It would be great to be 10 years younger.
wish

- f) I imagine he regrets not speaking to her.
wish


3 Write four wishes of your own. Write two regrets about the past and two about how you wish things were different now. For example, *I wish I'd studied harder at school. I wish I had more money. I wish it wasn't raining.*

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____

Ugly

Jon Bon Jovi

Jon Bon Jovi was born John Francis Bongiovi Jr on 2nd March, 1962. His first band was Atlantic City Expressway. He made his breakthrough with the song 'Runaway'.

1  50 Listen to the song.

- a) Is it a romantic song?
- b) Who is the singer talking to?
- c) What does he think of her?
- d) What does she think of herself?

2 Look at the lyrics of the first two verses of the song. The lines have been cut in half. In Column A the lines are in the correct order but in Column B they are mixed up. Listen again and match the two halves of each line.

A
If you're ugly,
In your eyes
If you could see yourself
You'd wish you were
And I wish I was
So I could take your picture
Put it in a frame
How beautiful

B
you really are to me
a camera sometimes
as beautiful as you
for you to see
I'm ugly too!
with my mind
like others do
the sky's a different blue



Close up

I wish 1 Look at the lyrics in 2. What tense is used after *I wish*?

2 Make *I wish* sentences for the following situations.

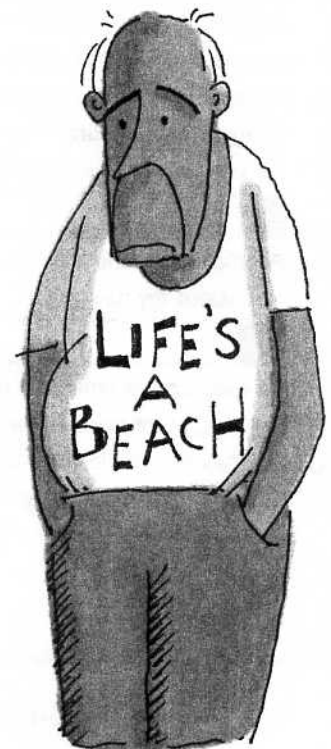
For example:

I'm poor. → *I wish I had more money.*

- a) I live in a tiny house in the suburbs.
- b) I've got a boring job.
- c) My car's 15 years old.
- d) My wife doesn't understand me.
- e) My children never listen to a word I say.
- f) I never have time to do the things I like.
- g) I hardly ever see my friends.

3 What wishes do you have about your own life? Write down a few and then tell your partner about them.

I wish I was/were ...
wasn't/weren't so ...
had .../didn't have ...
lived ...
could ...



Interview with Jon Bon Jovi

1 What do you know about Jon Bon Jovi?

2 In the interview below, he answers some of the following questions:

- a) If you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would you like to be?
- b) What do you do in your spare time?
- c) Who would you most like to have lunch with?
- d) What makes you angry?
- e) What would surprise people most about you?
- f) If your best friend was about to marry someone you thought was totally unsuitable, would you give an honest opinion?
- g) What scares you?
- h) If an old flame invited you to dinner, would you go?
- i) If you could change anything, what would it be?
- j) What's the best thing about your work?

Match a question to each of his answers.

Q&A JON BON JOVI

1 _____ ?

My mother. At the peak of Bon Jovi's early success, the group went through a period of real extravagance. We hired private planes, chartered the biggest yachts in the world, took all our friends on holiday to exotic islands, bought each other Ferraris and gave our parents expensive presents. But Mum would always much rather I went round for Sunday lunch instead of buying her another gift.

2 _____ ?

Being a rock 'n' roll star is not as romantic as people think. It's actually a very strenuous job – especially when you're on the road 240 days a year. Songwriting, creating something that you can have for ever, is what gives me the greatest thrill.

3 _____ ?

People who come to interview me and only want to talk about my hairstyle.

4 _____ ?

I'd spend more time with my wife, Dorothea, and my kids, Stephanie and James. I take them with me whenever possible. They all came to live with me in London for three months while I was filming the thriller *The Leading Man*, but I still don't see enough of them.

5 _____ ?

I used to worry about living up to the success of the last record, especially after *Slippery When Wet* sold 14 million copies. But these days, I'm much more relaxed and personal artistic satisfaction means more than commercial success.

6 _____ ?

That I'm not out on the town every night. When I was in London filming, I would drive to work at 6 am and see people coming out of the clubs and feel thankful that I'd had a good night's sleep. I'm all for going out on a bender now and again, but you can't do it every night.



(Adapted from Candice, October 1997)

3 Work in small groups and discuss your own answers to the questions in 2 above.

Grammar

1 Complete the conversation with an appropriate form of the verb in brackets.

A: Do you think I (a) _____ (look) good if I wore this for the interview?

B: Hardly! If I (b) _____ (be) the interviewer, I would wonder why you were dressed to go to a party. If I were you I (c) _____ (wear) something more formal, something in a darker colour. You could wear your black skirt if you (d) _____ (buy) something to go with it.

A: If I (e) _____ (have) the money, I would. And if I (f) _____ (have) the time, but the interview is tomorrow. Do you think they (g) _____ (mind) if I (h) _____ (ask) them to postpone the interview?

B: If someone (i) _____ (ask) me if they (j) _____ (postpone) the interview, I (k) _____ (probably say) 'yes', but I (l) _____ (want) to know the reason.



2 Give advice, by completing the sentences.

Example If you got contact lenses, people wouldn't laugh at your old glasses.

- a) If you sorted out your teeth, girls _____
- b) If you got rid of your spots, you _____
- c) You would meet more people if _____
- d) You might also meet some people if you _____
- e) If you got a job, you _____
- f) You could use the Internet if you _____
- g) If you didn't talk to people about your stamp collection, they _____
- h) People might want to talk to you if _____

I wish

3 Circle the best verb form.

Unit 14

- a) I wish he *did/was/would* stop smoking.
- b) I wish he *couldn't/wasn't/wouldn't* talk about football all the time.
- c) I wish he *did look/looked/would look* like his brother.
- d) I wish his brother *is/was/would be* here.
- e) If only his brother *couldn't be/isn't/wasn't* married!
- f) I wish I *was/wasn't/would be* better looking.
- g) I wish I *had/have/would have* a sports car.
- h) I wish I *am not/didn't be/wasn't* so nervous.
- i) I wish I *am telling/could tell/was told* her how I feel.
- j) If only she *kisses/was kissed/would kiss* me!



4 Complete these sentences with an appropriate form of the verb in brackets.

Unit 15

≠ wish

- a) If this were a hotter country, we _____ (need) air-conditioning.
- b) If my alarm clock was working properly, I _____ (not oversleep) this morning.
- c) If we hadn't missed the train, we _____ (not arrive) so late.
- d) I would have helped you if I _____ (not be) so busy at the moment.
- e) If I hadn't spent so much on holiday, I _____ (not be) so short of money now.
- f) You wouldn't be feeling so ill if you _____ (not eat) so much last night.

Grammar

1 Rewrite the sentences below beginning with *I wish ...*

Example

Why didn't I stop at the traffic lights?
I wish I had stopped at the traffic lights.



On the way home from a fancy-dress party

- a) It's a pity the police saw me.
I wish _____
- b) I shouldn't have drunk so much at the party.
I wish _____
- c) Why didn't I leave my car at the party?
I wish _____
- d) I could have asked someone to give me a lift home.
I wish _____
- e) Or I could have called a taxi!
I wish _____
- f) Why on earth did I choose such a stupid costume?
I wish _____
- g) I should have changed before leaving the party.
I wish _____
- h) It's a pity I went to the party!
I wish _____

2 Complete the sentences by putting the verbs in brackets into the appropriate tense.



The morning after the night before

I wish

- a) If he _____ (not go) to the party, he _____ (not be) in prison now!
- b) If he _____ (think) about it more carefully, he _____ (choose) another costume.
- c) He _____ (leave) his car at home, if he _____ (choose) another costume.
- d) If he _____ (feel) less embarrassed at the party, he _____ (drink) less.
- e) His car _____ (still be) outside the party if he _____ (take) a taxi.
- f) If he _____ (not jump) the red light, the police _____ (not stop) him.
- g) He _____ (be) happy sleeping in his bed if he _____ (not be) arrested.
- h) If none of this _____ (happen), he _____ (feel) much happier.