

## Expressing „wish“

### Wish + (that) + past simple:

We can use 'wish' to talk about something that we would like to be different in the **present** or the **future**. It's used for things which are impossible or very unlikely.

- I wish that I had a big house (I don't have a big house, but it's a nice idea!).
- I wish that we didn't need to work today (we do need to work today, unfortunately).
- I wish that you lived close by (you don't live close by).
- I wish that John wasn't busy tomorrow\* (he is busy, unfortunately).

In formal writing, you will see 'were' instead of 'was' after wish.

'I wish I were rich' or 'I wish I was rich'.

We also use 'wish' with '**could**' to talk about things in the present or future that we would like **to be different**. In this situation, 'could' is the past simple of 'can'.

- I wish that I could speak Spanish (but, unfortunately, I can't speak Spanish).
- I wish that I could drive (I can't drive).
- I wish that we could go to the party tonight (unfortunately, we're busy so we can't go).
- I wish that John could help you clean up (John is at work, so he can't help).

We don't usually use 'wish' in this way for things that are really possible in the future. Instead, we use 'hope'

- I hope that you **pass** your exam (NOT: ).
- I hope that **it's** sunny tomorrow (NOT: ).
- I hope that Julie **has** a lovely holiday (NOT: ).

### Wish + (that) + would:

On the other hand, we use '**would**' with '**wish**' in a little bit of a **special** way. It's generally used about other people who are doing (or not doing) something that we don't like and we want that person to **change**. It's *not* usually used about *ourselves*, or about *something* which *nobody can change* though, exceptionally, we do use it about the *weather*.

- I wish that John wouldn't eat all the chocolate. (John does usually eat all the chocolate and I don't like it. I want him to change his behaviour!)
- I wish that the neighbours would be quiet! (They are not quiet and I don't like the noise.)
- I wish that you wouldn't smoke so much! (You do smoke a lot and I don't like it. I want you to change this.)
- I wish that you wouldn't work late so often.
- I wish that it would stop raining!

We **don't** usually use **'would'** when there's **no feeling** that we want somebody to change their behaviour.

- NOT: (Instead: I wish that tomorrow was a holiday.)
- NOT: (It's strange to use 'wish' + 'would' about yourself, as you can change your behaviour if you don't like it!)

## Wishes about the past

### **Wish + (that) + past perfect:**

We can use 'wish' with the past perfect to talk about regrets from the **past**. These are things that have already happened but we wish they'd happened in a different way.

- I wish that I had studied harder at school. (I didn't study hard at school, and now I'm sorry about it.)
- I wish that I hadn't eaten so much yesterday! (But I did eat a lot yesterday. Now I think it wasn't a good idea.)
- I wish that the train had been on time. (But unfortunately the train was late, and so I missed my interview.)

„If only“ can be used in the same way as „I wish“.