

## 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 mansion.
4. If only I had curly hair.
5. I wish I looked more handsome.
6. If only I lived with my brother.

Students then move on to read how *I wish* and *If only* can be used to express regrets for past situations. After that, students complete regrets with the past perfect form of the 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 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 mansion.  
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.**

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)

