



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

Boy: 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.

Girl: 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)

could have

Use *could have* to talk about lost opportunities in the past:

I wish / If only I could have found someone to cover for me. (but I couldn't)

I wish / If only you could have been there. (but you weren't)

1 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 I *could have met* / *would have met* your father.
- 6 A: I'm bored!
B: I wish you *weren't saying* / *wouldn't say* that!

2 Look at the pictures and complete the people's thoughts using the verbs in parentheses.



- 1 I wish I (read) Japanese.



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



- 2 If only I (bring) my umbrella.



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



- 3 I wish it (be) so hot!



- 6 If only I (have) enough money.

3 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