

## How to Use “I Wish” and “If Only”

We can use **WISH** in fixed expressions:

*I wish you a happy New Year/birthday/retirement.*

*We wish you good luck in your new apartment/job.*

You can also use **wish** instead of **want**:

*I wish/want to speak to the manager.*

*I wish/want to enrol that school.*

However, we can use the verb **wish** and the phrase **if only** to speak about things we want but which are not likely to happen.

**Wish** and **if only** are interchangeable but **if only** is *more emphatic*.

### ***I wish / If only + Past Tense – wish about the present***

We use **wish** and **if only** with past tense forms to express regret about the present situation.

*I wish we were on holiday.* (But we are not. We have to work.)

*I wish I had a bigger house.* (But I don't. My house is small.)

*If only it weren't so hot.* (But it's scorching.)

Note: in standard English, after **I/he/she/it** we use ‘**were**’ and not ‘**was**’.

We can use **wish + past continuous** to say that we want to be doing something different in the present.

*I wish we were flying instead of driving.*

*If only we were watching a movie now. But we have to do our homework.*

### ***I wish/If only + would – wish about the future***

We use the modal verb **would** to express a wish for a change in the future:

*I wish it would stop raining.*

*I wish you would pass that test.*

*If only my neighbours would stop yelling at each other.*

### ***I wish/If only + Past Perfect – regret about the past***

We use the construction **wish + Past Perfect** to express regret about the past.

*If only I had passed the test.*

*I wish I had been a better student.*

*I wish we hadn't polluted our planet.*

### **Wish and hope**

If you want to express your wish about the future, use **hope + present form**, and not wish.

*I hope it isn't windy tomorrow.* (not: ~~I wish it weren't windy~~)

*We hope you have a pleasant trip.* (not: ~~we wish you had a pleasant trip~~)

### **Exercise:**

1. I wish \_\_\_\_\_ a bigger car.
  - a) I have
  - b) I had
  - c) would have
2. \_\_\_\_\_ she passes her exam.
  - a) I wish
  - b) If only
  - c) I hope
3. I wish \_\_\_\_\_ stop snowing.
  - a) it would
  - b) it had
  - c) it will
4. If only \_\_\_\_\_ on the beach instead of working now.
  - a) we were lying
  - b) we had been lying
  - c) we will be lying
5. I wish \_\_\_\_\_ Japanese.
  - a) I speak
  - b) I spoke
  - c) I was speaking
6. If only someone \_\_\_\_\_ our car.
  - a) bought
  - b) would buy
  - c) buys
7. I wish I \_\_\_\_\_ so much last night.
  - a) didn't eat
  - b) wasn't eating
  - c) hadn't eaten

8. I wish Peter \_\_\_\_\_ smoking.

- a) stops
- b) stopped
- c) would stop

9. If only I \_\_\_\_\_ to my mum when I was little.

- a) were listening
- b) listened
- c) had listened

10. If only my neighbours \_\_\_\_\_ so loud.

- a) weren't
- b) hadn't
- c) weren't being

**Key**

1. I wish I had a bigger car.
2. I hope she passes her exam.
3. I wish it would stop snowing.
4. If only we were lying on the beach instead of working now.
5. I wish I spoke Japanese.
6. If only someone would buy our car.
7. I wish I hadn't eaten so much last night.
8. I wish Peter would stop smoking.
9. If only I had listened to my mum when I was little.
10. If only my neighbours weren't so loud.