

English B2 · wish and if only

Upper-intermediate English for Chinese speakers; classroom examples, not official exam items.

The grammar lamp

wish is a lamp, and the verb inside the wish wears the costume of the unreal:
past for now, past perfect for then, would for other people's behaviour.

Wishing about now

Reality	The wish
I am not tall.	I wish I were taller.
We don't have a car.	If only we had a car.
She can't come.	I wish she could come.

Use the evidence

Formal wishes prefer were for everyone: I wish I were you.

Your turn: the costume

Your turn

I wish I ____ taller.

- ☐ A. am
- ☐ B. was
- ☐ C. were
- ☐ D. would be

Regretting the past

- 1 **The reality** I didn't bring an umbrella. I am wet.
- 2 **The wish** I wish I had brought an umbrella.
- 3 **The machinery** wish + had + participle — the third conditional's if-side, standing alone.

Decision

If only I had listened to the weather forecast. The result is silence and rain.

Your turn: the regret

Your turn

I wish I ____ the homework yesterday. (I didn't.)

- ☐ A. started
- ☐ B. had started
- ☐ C. would start
- ☐ D. would have started

Complaints and hopes

wish + would — behaviour of others

I wish you would stop singing.

I wish it would stop raining.

never would about yourself

I wish I would study more — impossible.

I wish I could focus. I wish I studied more.

Your turn: hope or wish

Your turn

I ____ you pass the exam. (You might!)

- A. wish
- B. hope
- C. wish would
- D. if only

The lamp checks grammar

... covers everything — English splits it

Present wish → past form: I wish I were taller.

Past regret → past perfect: I wish I had studied harder.

Complaint → would: I wish you would stop singing.

Say it aloud

I wish I were taller. The top shelf remains my enemy.



If only I had started the homework yesterday.



I wish the weekend would come faster. It won't. It enjoys this.



And one real hope: I hope we all pass — a real possibility; we have grammar on our side.

Check yourself

- I wish I were taller — the present wish, the past costume.
- I wish I had brought an umbrella — the past regret, rewind.
- I wish it would stop raining — the complaint takes would.
- I hope you pass — a real possibility takes hope.