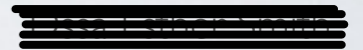




3 WISHES

I wish / If only...



WISHES

- We use *wish* to talk about situations we would like to change but can't because they are out of our control or they're in the past.
- The tenses do **not** correspond to the time we are talking about - i.e. for present time we do not use the present tense. (In this way they are similar to the conditionals.)



WISH + PAST

WISH + PAST SIMPLE

to express a wish/ desire to change something about the **present** and **future**.

Present situation: I **don't have** a car.
Desire: I wish I **had** a car.

N.B I'm not very fit.
I wish I were fitter. (*I was* = common in spoken English)

WISH + COULD (for ability/ possibility/ permission)

Present situation: I **can't** swim.
Desire: I wish I **could** swim.



WISH + PAST PERFECT

WISH + PAST PERFECT

to express a desire to change something about the **past**
(**regrets, self-criticism**)

Past situation: I **lost** my keys yesterday.

Regret: I wish I **hadn't lost** my keys.

Past situation: I **didn't finish** the test.

Regret: I wish I'd **finished** the test. ('d = had)



WISH + WOULD

WISH + WOULD + INF (without 'to')

to express irritation/ annoyance/ impatience

Present situation: He **bites** his nails. This annoys me.
I wish he **wouldn't bite** his nails.

You **don't listen** to me.
I wish you'**d listen** to me. ('d = would)

N.B. NOT I wish I ~~wouldn't bite~~ my nails.
I wish I *didn't bite* my nails.

I WISH = IF ONLY

- You can use *If only* instead of *I wish* for **emphasis**. You can only mention the **result** of a wish if you use *If only*.
 - I wish I had a car.
 - If only I had a car, I wouldn't have to rely on others for lifts. (*close link to 2nd conditional*)
 - I wish I hadn't lost my keys.
 - If only I hadn't lost my keys, I wouldn't have had to get new ones cut. (*close link to 3rd conditional*)
 - If only I hadn't lost my keys, I wouldn't be locked out of my house now. (*present result - close link to mixed conditional*).
 - I wish you wouldn't make so much noise!
 - If only you wouldn't make so much noise, I would be able to concentrate/ could concentrate on my homework!