

If I had known ... I wish I had known ...

Study this example situation:

Last month Gary was in hospital for a few days. Rachel didn't know this, so she didn't go to visit him. They met a few days ago. Rachel said:

If I had known you were in hospital, I would have gone to see you.

Rachel said: If I had known you were in hospital ... This tells us that she *didn't* know he was in hospital.

We use **if + had ('d) ... to talk about the past (if I had known/been/done etc.):**

- I didn't see you when you passed me in the street. **If I'd seen you, of course I would have said hello.** (but I didn't see you)
- I decided to stay at home last night. I would have gone out **if I hadn't been so tired.** (but I was tired)
- If he had been looking where he was going, he wouldn't have walked into the wall. (but he wasn't looking)
- The view was wonderful. **If I'd had a camera with me, I would have taken some photographs.** (but I didn't have a camera)

Compare:

- I'm not hungry. **If I was hungry, I would eat something.** (*now*)
- I wasn't hungry. **If I had been hungry, I would have eaten something.** (*past*)

Do not use **would** in the **if**-part of the sentence. We use **would** in the other part of the sentence:

- If I had seen you, I would have said hello. (*not* If I would have seen you)

Note that 'd can be **would** or **had**:

- If I'd seen you, (I'd seen = I had seen)
- I'd have said hello. (I'd have said = I would have said)

We use **had (done)** in the same way after **wish**. I wish something **had happened** = I am sorry that it didn't happen:

- I wish I'd known that Gary was ill. I would have gone to see him. (but I didn't know)
- I feel sick. I wish I hadn't eaten so much cake. (I ate too much cake)
- Do you wish you had studied science instead of languages? (you didn't study science)

Do not use **would have ... after wish**:

- The weather was cold while we were away. I wish it had been warmer. (*not* I wish it would have been)

Compare **would (do) and would have (done)**:

- If I had gone to the party last night, I would be tired now. (I am not tired now - *present*)
- If I had gone to the party last night, I would have met lots of people. (I didn't meet lots of people - *past*)

Compare **would have, could have and might have**:

- If the weather hadn't been so bad,
 

we would have gone out.	}	we could have gone out.
we might have gone out.		
(= perhaps we would have gone out)		

Exercises

Unit 40

40.1 Put the verb into the correct form.

- 1 I didn't know you were in hospital. If I'd known (I / know), I would have gone (I / go) to see you.
- 2 Sam got to the station just in time to catch the train to the airport. If (he / miss) the train, (he / miss) his flight.
- 3 I'm glad that you reminded me about Amanda's birthday. (I / forget) if (you / not / remind) me.
- 4 Unfortunately I forgot my address book when I went on holiday. If (I / have) your address, (I / send) you a postcard.
- 5 A: How was your holiday? Did you have a nice time?  
B: It was OK, but (we / enjoy) it more if (the weather / be) nicer.
- 6 I took a taxi to the hotel, but the traffic was bad. (I / walk) quicker if (I / be) tired, I'd go home now.
- 7 I'm not tired. If (I / be) tired, I'd go home now.
- 8 I wasn't tired last night. If (I / be) tired, I would have gone home earlier.

40.2 For each situation, write a sentence beginning with **If**.

- 1 I wasn't hungry, so I didn't eat anything.  
If I'd been hungry, I would have eaten something.
- 2 The accident happened because the road was icy.  
If the road (I / be) tired, I'd go home now.
- 3 I didn't know that Joe had to get up early, so I didn't wake him up.  
If I (I / be) tired, I would have gone home earlier.
- 4 I was able to buy the car only because Jane lent me the money.
- 5 Karen wasn't injured in the crash because she was wearing a seat belt.
- 6 You didn't have any breakfast - that's why you're hungry now.
- 7 I didn't get a taxi because I didn't have any money.

40.3 Imagine that you are in these situations. For each situation, write a sentence with **I wish**.

- 1 You've eaten too much and now you feel sick.  
You say: I wish I hadn't eaten so much.
- 2 There was a job advertised in the newspaper. You decided not to apply for it. Now you think that your decision was wrong.  
You say: I wish I (I / be) tired, I'd go home now.
- 3 When you were younger, you never learned to play a musical instrument. Now you regret this.  
You say: I wish I hadn't eaten so much.
- 4 You've painted the gate red. Now you think that red was the wrong colour.  
You say: I wish I (I / be) tired, I'd go home now.
- 5 You are walking in the country. You'd like to take some photographs, but you didn't bring your camera.  
You say: I wish I hadn't eaten so much.
- 6 You have some unexpected guests. They didn't phone first to say they were coming. You are very busy and you are not prepared for them.  
You say (to yourself): I wish I hadn't eaten so much.



If I knew ... I wish I knew ...

Study this example situation:

Sarah wants to phone Paul, but she can't do this because she doesn't know his number.  
She says:

If I knew his number, I would phone him.

Sarah says: If I knew his number ... This tells us that she *doesn't* know his number. She is imagining the situation. The *real* situation is that she doesn't know his number.



When you imagine a situation like this, you use *if + past* (if I knew / if you were / if we didn't etc.). But the meaning is present, *not* past:

- Tom would read more if he had more time. (but he doesn't have much time)
- If I didn't want to go to the party, I wouldn't go. (but I want to go)
- We wouldn't have any money if we didn't work. (but we work)
- If you were in my position, what would you do?
- It's a pity you can't drive. It would be useful if you could.

We use the past in the same way after *wish* (I wish I knew / I wish you were etc.). We use *wish* to say that we regret something, that something is not as we would like it to be:

- I wish I knew Paul's phone number. (= I don't know it and I regret this)
- Do you ever wish you could fly? (you can't fly)
- It rains a lot here. I wish it didn't rain so often.
- It's very crowded here. I wish there weren't so many people. (there are a lot of people)
- I wish I didn't have to work tomorrow, but unfortunately I do.



**C**

If I were / if I was  
After *if* and *wish*, you can use *were* instead of *was* (if I were ... / I wish it were etc.). I was / it was are also possible. So you can say:

- If I were you, I wouldn't buy that coat. *or* If I was you, ...
- I'd go out if it weren't so cold. *or* ... if it wasn't so cold.
- I wish Carol were here. *or* I wish Carol was here.

**D**

We do not normally use *would* in the *if*-part of the sentence or after *wish*:

- If I were rich, I would have a yacht. (*not* If I would be rich)
- I wish I had something to read. (*not* I wish I would have)

Sometimes *wish ... would* is possible: I wish you would listen. See Unit 41.

**E**

Could sometimes means 'would be able to' and sometimes 'was/were able to':

- You could get a better job. (you could get = you would be able to get)
- if you could use a computer. (you could use = you were able to use)

Could → Units 26–27 If I do / if I did → Unit 38 If I had known / I wish I had known → Unit 40  
Wish → Unit 41

Exercises

39.1 Put the verb into the correct form.

- 1 If I knew (know) his number, I would phone him.
- 2 I wouldn't buy (not / buy) that coat if I were you.
- 3 I ..... (help) you if I could, but I'm afraid I can't.
- 4 We would need a car if we ..... (live) in the country.
- 5 If we had the choice, we ..... (live) in the country.
- 6 This soup isn't very good. It ..... (taste) better if it wasn't so salty.
- 7 I wouldn't mind living in England if the weather ..... (be) better.
- 8 If I were you, I ..... (not / wait). I ..... (go) now.
- 9 You're always tired. If you ..... (not / go) to bed so late every night, you wouldn't be tired all the time.
- 10 I think there are too many cars. If there ..... (not / be) so many cars, there ..... (not / be) so much pollution.

39.2 Write a sentence with *if ... for* each situation.

- 1 We don't see you very often because you live so far away.  
*If you didn't live so far away, we'd see you more often.*
- 2 This book is too expensive, so I'm not going to buy it.  
*I'd ..... if .....*
- 3 We don't go out very often – we can't afford it.  
*We ..... if .....*
- 4 I can't meet you tomorrow – I have to work late.  
*If .....*
- 5 It's raining, so we can't have lunch outside.  
*We .....*
- 6 I don't want his advice, and that's why I'm not going to ask for it.  
*If .....*

39.3 Write sentences beginning *I wish ...*

- 1 I don't know many people (and I'm lonely). *I wish I knew more people.*
- 2 I don't have a mobile phone (and I need one). I wish .....
- 3 Helen isn't here (and I need to see her). .....
- 4 It's cold (and I hate cold weather). .....
- 5 I live in a big city (and I don't like it). .....
- 6 I can't go to the party (and I'd like to). .....
- 7 I have to work tomorrow (but I'd like to stay in bed). .....
- 8 I don't know anything about cars (and my car has just broken down). .....
- 9 I'm not feeling well (and it's not nice). .....

39.4 Write your own sentences beginning *I wish ...*

- 1 (somewhere you'd like to be now – on the beach, in New York, in bed etc.)  
I wish I .....
- 2 (something you'd like to have – a computer, a job, lots of money etc.)  
.....
- 3 (something you'd like to be able to do – sing, speak a language, fly etc.)  
.....
- 4 (something you'd like to be – beautiful, strong, rich etc.)  
.....

→ Additional exercises 19–21 (pages 313–14)



- 4 What would you do if you were in a lift and it stopped between floors?
- 38.3  
 2 If he took his driving test, he'd fail (it) / ... he would fail (it).  
 3 If we stayed at a hotel, it would cost too much.  
 4 If she applied for the job, she wouldn't get it.  
 5 If we told them the truth, they wouldn't believe us.  
 6 If we invited Bill, we'd have to invite his friends too. / ... we would have to ...
- 38.4  
*Example answers:*  
 2 I'd be very angry if somebody broke into my house.  
 3 If I didn't go to work tomorrow, I'd have a much nicer day than usual.  
 4 Would you go to the party if you were invited?  
 5 If you bought some new clothes, you'd feel much better.  
 6 Would you mind if I didn't go out with you this evening?
- 39.1  
 3 I'd help / would help  
 4 lived  
 5 I'd live / would live  
 6 would taste  
 7 were/was  
 8 wouldn't wait ... 'd go / would go  
 9 didn't go  
 10 weren't ... wouldn't be
- 39.2  
 2 I'd buy it / I would buy it if it weren't/wasn't so expensive.  
 3 We'd go out / We would go out more often if we could afford it.  
 4 If I didn't have to work late, I could meet you tomorrow. or ... I'd be able to meet ... We could have lunch outside if it weren't raining / wasn't raining.  
 6 If I wanted his advice, I'd ask for it / I would ask for it.
- 39.3  
 2 I wish I had a mobile phone.  
 3 I wish Helen were/was here.  
 4 I wish it weren't/wasn't (so) cold.  
 5 I wish I didn't live in a big city.  
 6 I wish I could go to the party.

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- 7 I wish I didn't have to work tomorrow.  
 8 I wish I knew something about cars.  
 9 I wish I were feeling / was feeling better.
- 39.4  
*Example answers:*  
 1 I wish I was at home.  
 2 I wish I had a big garden.  
 3 I wish I could tell jokes.  
 4 I wish I was taller.
- 40.1  
 2 If he'd missed / he had missed the train, he'd have missed / he would have missed his flight.  
 3 I'd have forgotten / I would have forgotten ... you hadn't reminded  
 4 I'd had / I had had ... I'd have sent / I would have sent we'd have enjoyed / we would have enjoyed ... the weather had been  
 6 It would have been ... I'd walked / I had walked  
 7 I were / I was  
 8 I'd been / I had been
- 40.2  
 2 If the road hadn't been icy, the accident wouldn't have happened.  
 3 If I'd known / If I had known (that) Joe had to get up early, I'd have woken / I would have woken him up.  
 4 If Jane hadn't lent me the money, I wouldn't have been able to buy the car. or ... I couldn't have bought the car. If Karen hadn't been wearing a seat belt, she'd have been injured / she would have been injured (in the crash).  
 6 If you'd had / If you had had (some) breakfast, you wouldn't be hungry now.  
 7 If I'd had / If I had had (some) money, I'd have got / I would have got a taxi.
- 40.3  
 2 I wish I'd applied / I wish I had applied for it. or ... for the job.  
 3 I wish I'd learned / I wish I had learned to play a musical instrument (when I was younger).  
 4 I wish I hadn't painted it red. or ... the gate red.  
 5 I wish I'd brought / I wish I had brought my camera.

UNIT 40

- 6 I wish they'd phoned / I wish they had phoned first (to say they were coming). or I wish I'd known / I wish I had known they were coming.
- UNIT 41  
 41.1  
 2 hope  
 3 wish  
 4 wished  
 5 hope  
 6 wish ... hope
- 41.2  
 2 I wish Jane/she would come. or ... would hurry up.  
 3 I wish somebody would give me a job.  
 4 I wish that/baby would stop crying.  
 5 I wish you would buy some new clothes. or I wish you would get some new clothes.  
 6 I wish you wouldn't drive so fast.  
 7 I wish you wouldn't leave the door open (all the time).  
 8 I wish people wouldn't drop litter in the street.
- 41.3  
 2 OK  
 3 I wish I had more free time.  
 4 I wish our flat was/were a bit bigger.  
 5 OK  
 6 OK  
 7 I wish everything wasn't/weren't so expensive.
- 41.4  
 3 I knew  
 4 I'd taken / I had taken  
 5 I could come  
 6 I wasn't / I weren't  
 7 they'd hurry / they would hurry  
 8 we didn't have  
 9 we could have stayed  
 10 it wasn't / weren't  
 11 he'd decide / he would decide  
 12 we hadn't gone
- UNIT 42  
 42.1  
 2 is made  
 3 was damaged  
 4 were invited  
 5 are shown  
 6 are held  
 7 was written ... was translated  
 8 were overtaken  
 9 is surrounded

