

wish / If only

Subject + wish...	+ Subject	+ past perfect > regrets about the past regret (n): <i>pesar, arrepentimiento</i> ; to regret (v): <i>lamentar</i>
If only... (more emphatic, stronger)		+ past > regrets about the present

1 Regrets about the past. These people did something yesterday which they now regret. What does each person say? Use the Past Perfect, e.g.

Clare has caught a bad cold - yesterday she went out in the rain without an umbrella.

I wish/ If only I hadn't gone out in the rain without an umbrella.

1 Joe has got very bad sunburn - yesterday he stayed in the sun for long.

I

2 He's got an awful stomachache - yesterday he ate a lot.

I

3 Lewis hurt his leg in a car crash - yesterday he didn't drive carefully.

I

4 Sue has hurt her back - yesterday she lifted a heavy table on her own.

I

2 Regrets about the present. Use the Past to complete what the speaker says.

1 I'm so shy.

I wish

2 I don't know what to say to people.

.....

3 I find it so difficult to make friends.

.....

4 I'm not good-looking.

.....

5 My ears are so big.

If only

4 What would you say? Use "I wish.../ If only..."

- 1 You'd like the baby to stop crying because you're trying to sleep.
.....
- 2 It's a pity you can't swim.
.....
- 3 You don't like it when Jack leaves the door open.
.....
- 4 You have to work tomorrow but you'd like to stay in bed.
.....
- 5 You would like people to stop fighting.
.....
- 6 You're sorry you didn't bring your camera.
.....
- 7 It's a pity you didn't work harder during the term.
.....
- 8 You're sorry you didn't get a ticket for the concert.
.....

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7 Rewrite these sentences with the new beginnings.

- 2 What a pity he didn't spend more time revising.
If only
- 3 I should have learnt German at school!
I wish

- 7 I've got so much to do today.
I wish
- 8 What a shame you didn't tell me earlier.
If only

KEY TO EXERCISES

- 1** 1. I wish I hadn't stayed in the sun so long. 2. I wish I'd eaten less. 3. I wish I'd driven more carefully. 4. I wish I hadn't tried to lift a heavy table on my own.
- 2** 1. ...I weren't so shy. 2. If only I knew what to say to people. 3. I wish I didn't find it so difficult to make friends. 4. I wish I were good-looking. 5. ...my ears weren't so big.
- 4** (Possible answers) 1. If only the baby would stop crying. 2. I wish I could swim. 3. I wish Jack didn't leave the door open. 4. If only I didn't have to work tomorrow. 5. If only people stopped fighting. 6. I wish I had brought my camera. 7. I wish I had worked harder during the term. 8. If only I had got a ticket for the concert.¹
- 7** 1. ...we left if we want to arrive on time. 2. ...he had spent more time revising. 3. ...I had learnt German at school. 4. ...stay at home tonight if you don't mind. 5. ...you didn't interrupt me when I'm speaking. 6. ...found out how much it's going to cost. 7. ...I didn't have so much to do today. 8. ...you had told me earlier.