

Free B2-C1 Grammar Worksheet

Wish and If Only: Present Wishes, Past Regrets and Complaints

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. Grammar Focus

Use **wish** and **if only** to talk about situations that are unreal, regretted or different from what we want. The tense usually moves one step back from the real time. **If only** often sounds stronger or more emotional than **wish**.

Use	Pattern	Meaning / example
Present situation	wish / if only + past simple	Use this for a present situation you want to be different. I wish I knew the answer. If only I had more free time. I wish I didn't have to work late.
Present form of be	wish / if only + were	Were is preferred in careful hypothetical English with I/he/she/it. Was is also common and acceptable in informal speech, but this worksheet uses were in controlled answers. I wish I were more patient.
Present / future ability	wish / if only + could + base verb	Use this for ability or possibility that is not available now. I wish I could speak Japanese.
Past regret	wish / if only + past perfect	Use this for a completed past situation you regret. I wish I had taken that job. If only we had left earlier. I wish I hadn't said that.
Missed past ability / possibility	wish / if only + could have + past participle	Use this for something you were unable to do in the past. I wish I could have stayed longer. If only she could have joined us.
Complaint / desired change	wish + would + base verb	Use this when you want another person, behaviour or external situation to change. I wish the neighbours would stop drilling.
Negative complaint	wish + would not / wouldn't + base verb	Use this for behaviour or an external situation you want to stop or change. I wish you wouldn't interrupt me. I wish my phone wouldn't keep freezing.

Point	Remember
Wish vs hope	Wish usually presents the situation as unreal, regretted or contrary to fact. Use hope for a realistic future possibility, or for a past outcome that is still unknown: I hope the train arrives on time. I hope the meeting went well.
Wish + would	Normally use wish + would for a change in another person's behaviour or in an external situation. It often expresses irritation or a desire for something outside the speaker's direct control to change. For your own deliberate, controllable behaviour, normally use a present wish instead: I wish I didn't check my phone so often. Do not normally use I wish I would... for your own deliberate action.
If only	If only uses the same tense patterns as wish , but usually expresses stronger emotion.
Time clues	now / these days usually point to a present wish; yesterday / last week / then usually point to a past regret.

2. Choose the Best Form

Choose the option that best fits the context. Some items test form; others test the time or meaning of the wish.

No.	Context	Options
1	I do not know the answer now. I wish I ____ it.	knew / know
2	We booked too late and paid much more. If only we ____ earlier.	booked / had booked
3	I cannot drive. I wish I ____ drive.	could / can
4	The drilling has continued all morning. I wish the neighbours ____.	would have stopped / would stop
5	For careful hypothetical English: I wish I ____ more patient.	was / were
6	I skimmed the email yesterday and missed an important detail. I wish I ____ it more carefully.	had checked / checked
7	My manager regularly ignores suggestions in meetings. I wish my manager ____.	had listened / would listen
8	My schedule is too full these days. If only I ____ more free time.	had / will have
9	This train has been stationary for twenty minutes and I need to get home. I wish it ____.	would move / could have moved
10	I missed the conference because I was ill. I wish I ____ it.	could attend / could have attended
11	You arrive late for our weekly meeting almost every week. I wish you ____.	hadn't kept arriving late / wouldn't keep arriving late
12	She ignored the warning and regretted it later. If only she ____.	hadn't ignored it / wouldn't have ignored it

3. Match the Sentence to the Grammar Reason

Write the correct letter A-J beside each sentence. Two reasons are not used.

No.	Sentence	Answer
1	I wish I lived closer to the office.	
2	If only we had checked the booking details.	
3	I wish I could play the piano.	
4	I wish my colleague would reply to messages sooner.	
5	I wish I were less nervous in meetings.	
6	If only I had more energy after work.	
7	I wish I had listened to the technician's advice.	
8	I wish this app would stop crashing.	

A-J	Grammar reason
A	Use wish + would + base verb with a person or group whose behaviour you want to change.
B	Use wish + past perfect for regret about a completed past situation.
C	Use wish + past simple with a verb other than be for a present situation you want to be different.
D	Use if only + past simple for a strongly felt present situation you want to be different.
E	Use if only + could + base verb for strongly felt present or future inability.
F	Use if only + past perfect for a strongly felt regret about the past.
G	Use wish + would + base verb with a thing or situation that you want to change.
H	Use wish + could + base verb for present or future ability that is unavailable.
I	Use wish / if only + could have + past participle for a missed past ability or possibility.
J	Use wish + were for the careful hypothetical form of be with I/he/she/it.

4. Correct the Mistakes

Each sentence contains one target grammar error. Write the complete corrected sentence.

No.	Incorrect sentence	Your correction
1	I wish I know the answer.	_____
2	If only we left earlier yesterday.	_____
3	I wish I can speak Italian.	_____
4	I wish the printer would stopped jamming.	_____
5	I wish I were be better at public speaking.	_____
6	I wish I had took the earlier train.	_____
7	I wish the lift wouldn't keeps breaking down.	_____
8	If only she could have see the exhibition before it closed.	_____

Teacher note: accept any grammatical correction that preserves the meaning.

5. Complete the Sentences

Complete each sentence with the best expression from the box. Two expressions are not used.

would stop dripping | had taken the offer | could have heard the final song | were more confident | had more time | wouldn't keep interrupting people | could speak Mandarin | hadn't ignored the warning | had been more confident | wouldn't have kept interrupting people

No.	Sentence
1	I turned down a job offer. I wish I _____.
2	I cannot communicate with several clients in China. I wish I _____.
3	I am overloaded at work. If only I _____.
4	The tap has been dripping all night. I wish it _____.
5	The warning was clear, but we dismissed it. If only we _____.
6	I had to leave before the final song. I wish I _____.
7	I become nervous in presentations these days. I wish I _____.
8	He talks over everyone in meetings. I wish he _____.

6. Rewrite Using Wish or If Only

Rewrite each sentence using the word or structure shown. Preserve the meaning.

No.	Original	Instruction	Your rewrite
1	I do not understand this software.	Use wish.	_____
2	We regret not reserving a table.	Use if only + past perfect.	_____
3	I cannot work from home in this role.	Use wish + could.	_____
4	The neighbours play loud music every night.	Use wish + would.	_____
5	I wasn't able to ask the speaker a question after the talk.	Use wish + could have.	_____
6	I am quite indecisive.	Use wish + were.	_____
7	You repeatedly check your phone while I am speaking.	Use wish + wouldn't.	_____
8	We forgot to back up the files before the update.	Use if only + past perfect.	_____

Teacher note: these are possible answers. Accept another grammatical rewrite that preserves the meaning and uses the required target form.

7. Meaning and Structure

Choose the category A-C that best matches each sentence.

Category	Meaning and structure
A	Unreal present situation or unavailable present ability - wish / if only + past simple / were / could
B	Past regret or missed past possibility - wish / if only + past perfect / could have
C	Complaint or desired change - wish + would / wouldn't

No.	Sentence	Answer
1	I wish I knew her number.	
2	I wish I could drive.	
3	If only we had checked the address.	
4	I wish the traffic would move.	
5	I wish I had taken the internship.	
6	I wish I could have joined the final session.	
7	If only I were more organised.	
8	I wish you wouldn't leave dirty cups on the desk.	

8. Speaking Practice

Discuss the questions in complete sentences. Use the target grammar where appropriate.

No.	Discussion question
1	What is one skill you wish you had now? Why would it help you?
2	What is one decision from the last few years you wish you had made differently?
3	What is one thing you wish people in your city would stop doing?
4	What is something you wish you could do more often?
5	Talk about a past event and use If only... to express a strong regret.
6	What is one habit of your own that you would like to change? Make a wish sentence about it, then explain why wish + would is usually not used for your own deliberate behaviour.
7	Give one example with wish + could have + past participle about a missed opportunity.
8	Explain the difference between: " I hope the meeting went well. " and " I wish the meeting had gone well. "

9. Write Your Own Sentences

Write one complete sentence for each prompt.

No.	Prompt	Your sentence
1	Present wish with wish + past simple .	
2	Past regret with if only + past perfect .	
3	Present inability with wish + could .	
4	Complaint about another person with wish + would .	
5	Missed past possibility with wish + could have + past participle .	
6	Careful hypothetical sentence with wish + were .	

10. Integrated Grammar Production

Write an **80-100 word paragraph** about one present situation you wish were different and one past decision or missed opportunity you regret.

Include all of the following:

No.	Required element
1	one wish + past simple or wish + were
2	one if only + past perfect
3	one wish + would or wouldn't
4	one wish + could or could have
5	one sentence with hope about a realistic future possibility

Underline the five target structures in your paragraph.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

11. Error-checking Challenge

The paragraph contains exactly seven target grammar errors. Find them and write the seven corrections below.

I wish I know more about investing, and if only I listened to my grandfather when he tried to teach me. Last year, I wish I would have accepted a place on a training course at work. I also wish I could spoke French, because it would help with several clients. My colleague sends messages late at night, and I wish he would stops doing that. If only our team booked the venue earlier; the final bill was much higher than expected. I had to leave a conference before the final session, and I wish I could stayed longer. Finally, I wish I were more confident in formal presentations.

Correction	Write the corrected form or phrase
1	_____
2	_____
3	_____
4	_____
5	_____
6	_____
7	_____

12. Useful Reminders

Reminder	Rule
Present wish	Use wish / if only + past simple for a present situation you want to be different.
Past regret	Use wish / if only + past perfect for regret about a completed past situation.
Ability	Use wish / if only + could + base verb for unavailable present/future ability; use wish / if only + could have + past participle for a missed past ability or possibility.
Would	Use wish + would + base verb mainly for another person's behaviour or an external situation you want to change. For your own deliberate behaviour, normally use a present wish instead.
Would not	Use wish + wouldn't + base verb for behaviour or an external situation you want to stop or change.
Were	Were is preferred in careful hypothetical English with I/he/she/it; was is common and acceptable in informal speech.
If only	If only uses the same tense patterns as wish but usually expresses stronger emotion.
Hope	Use hope , not wish , for a realistic future possibility or for a past outcome whose result is still unknown.

Answer Key

Section 2: Choose the Best Form

1-6	7-12
1. knew	7. would listen
2. had booked	8. had
3. could	9. would move
4. would stop	10. could have attended
5. were	11. wouldn't keep arriving late
6. had checked	12. hadn't ignored it

Section 3: Match the Sentence to the Grammar Reason

1-4	5-8
1. C	5. J
2. F	6. D
3. H	7. B
4. A	8. G

Unused reasons: E and I.

Section 4: Correct the Mistakes

No.	Correct sentence
1	I wish I knew the answer.
2	If only we had left earlier yesterday.
3	I wish I could speak Italian.
4	I wish the printer would stop jamming.
5	I wish I were better at public speaking.
6	I wish I had taken the earlier train.
7	I wish the lift wouldn't keep breaking down.
8	If only she could have seen the exhibition before it closed.

Teacher note: accept any grammatical correction that preserves the meaning.

Answer Key: Continued

Section 5: Complete the Sentences

1-4	5-8
1. had taken the offer	5. hadn't ignored the warning
2. could speak Mandarin	6. could have heard the final song
3. had more time	7. were more confident
4. would stop dripping	8. wouldn't keep interrupting people

Unused expressions: had been more confident; wouldn't have kept interrupting people.

Section 6: Rewrite Using Wish or If Only

No.	Possible answer
1	I wish I understood this software.
2	If only we had reserved a table.
3	I wish I could work from home in this role.
4	I wish the neighbours would stop playing loud music every night.
5	I wish I could have asked the speaker a question after the talk.
6	I wish I were more decisive.
7	I wish you wouldn't keep checking your phone while I am speaking.
8	If only we had backed up the files before the update.

Teacher note: these are possible answers. Accept another grammatical rewrite that preserves the meaning and uses the required target form.

Section 7: Meaning and Structure

1-4	5-8
1. A	5. B
2. A	6. B
3. B	7. A
4. C	8. C

Section 8: Speaking Practice

Other speaking questions are open.

Question 6 model: Wish + would often presents the desired change as depending on another person's willingness or behaviour, or on an external situation changing. A habit that the speaker deliberately controls is different: the speaker normally wishes for their own present behaviour or situation to be different. For example: **I wish I didn't check my phone so often.**

Question 8 model: I hope the meeting went well means the meeting has happened but the speaker does not yet know the outcome. **I wish the meeting had gone well** means the speaker knows it did not go well and regrets that result.

Answer Key: Continued

Section 9: Write Your Own Sentences

Teacher note: accept any grammatical sentence that uses the required **wish / if only** structure and matches the prompt.

Section 10: Integrated Grammar Production

No single model is required. Accept any coherent paragraph that:

- is approximately 80-100 words;
- contains all five required structures;
- underlines the five target structures;
- uses correct time reference;
- distinguishes **wish** from **hope** appropriately;
- uses **wish + would / wouldn't** for an appropriate external behaviour or situation.

Section 11: Error-checking Challenge

No.	Incorrect form	Correct form
1	I wish I know	I wish I knew
2	if only I listened	if only I had listened
3	I wish I would have accepted a place on a training course at work	I wish I had accepted a place on a training course at work
4	I wish I could spoke	I wish I could speak
5	would stops	would stop
6	If only our team booked	If only our team had booked
7	could stayed	could have stayed

Teacher note: accept any grammatical correction that preserves the meaning.

Section 12: Useful Reminders

No answers required.