

Using 'wish' in a sentence

wishes and regrets

The verb 'wish' is often used to express strong desires. When we wish for something in the past, it's always impossible or hypothetical, as we can't change the past. When we wish for something in the present or future we know it's unlikely to happen and sometimes even impossible.

We wish for

- something that happened earlier and you are sorry for now (past)
- something you want to be different than it is (or was) = a change (past, present and future)
- something that we haven't got, but really want (present and future)

Using 'wish' for past regrets

When we regret something, we feel sorry for something that happened or didn't happen in the past.

For example:

"I regret I never stretched after doing my exercises".

-> I'm now sorry I didn't stretch maybe because I now suffer from an injury.

"I regret I ate so much peanut butter, last night".

-> I'm now sorry I ate so much, maybe because I feel heavy and bloated today.

Now replace 'regret' by 'wish'

'I wish' + 'subject' + 'had' + 'verb past participle'.

"I wish I had stretched after doing my exercises".

"I wish I hadn't eaten so much peanut butter, last night".

Using 'wish' for present regrets

We can also use wish in the present. For example; when we preferred something or a situation to be different to what it is currently. Remember that here, even though we speak about the present, we use the past simple.

For example:

"I wish I was more flexible".

-> I would like to be more flexible than I currently am.

"They wish the class would be a little less intense".

-> They would like the class to be less challenging.

"She wishes she had more time to practise yoga".

-> She would like to have more time to practise yoga.

Using 'wish' to complain

We use wish to complain or when you want to clarify your desire for someone to stop something they're doing.

wish + pronoun + would

For example:

"I wish you wouldn't be so loud".

-> I would like you to be less noisy.

"He wishes she would be a bit more understanding".

-> He would like her to be more emphatic.

"We wish they wouldn't be late".

-> We would like them to be on time.

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Using 'wish' for dreams and hypothetical situations

We use wish to express our dreams and speak about impossible, hypothetical situations. We also use wish for dreams and situations that are not very likely to happen or just take a lot of time and effort.

wish + pronoun + could

For example:

"I wish I could quit my job and become a full-time yoga teacher".

-> *I would like to change my career path.*

"She wishes she could meditate for a longer period".

-> *She would like to be less distracted to be able to meditate longer.*

"He wishes he could go to India".

-> *He would like to visit India.*

Using 'wish' for states of being

1. When our wishes relate to actions, performed by other people we use

would + pronoun + infinitive

For example:

"I wish you would listen to me".

"I wish he would do the dishes for once".

"She wishes he would see her instead of her sister".

2. When we speak about repeated actions we would like not to happen anymore we use the following form:

wish + pronoun + wouldn't + keep + verb+ing (gerund)

For example:

"I wish you wouldn't keep listening to him".

"I wish he wouldn't keep avoiding doing the dishes for once".

"She wishes he wouldn't see her sister instead of her".

3. When our wishes relate to actions (opportunities, abilities, capabilities, permission) for ourselves we use 'could' instead of 'would'.

could + pronoun + infinitive

For example:

"I wish I could know what to do".

"I wish I could be more determined".

"I wish I could encounter my motivation".

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1. Practise - paraphrase the following sentences without 'wish'

e.g. "I wish you wouldn't be so loud". → I would like you to be less noisy.

1. "I wish you would listen to me".

2. "I wish he would do the dishes for once".

3. "She wishes he would see her instead of her sister".

4. "I wish you wouldn't keep listening to him".

5. "I wish he wouldn't keep avoiding doing the dishes for once".

6. "She wishes he wouldn't see her sister instead of her".

7. "I wish I could know what to do".

8. "I wish I could be more determined".

9. "I wish I could encounter my motivation".

2. Practise - decide whether these statements express a "wish" or a "regret"

1. I wish it was all a dream.
2. They wish they could turn back time.
3. She wishes she hadn't moved away from home.
4. He wishes he told her how he really felt.

3. Practise - choose the answer - using the correct tense

1. She got distracted and didn't meet her deadlines. She wishes she **worked** OR **had worked** harder.
2. He likes travelling very much. He wishes he **went** OR **had gone** earlier.
3. They fell head over heels in love with each other. They wish they **took** OR **had taken** it easier.
4. She's keen on trying again. She just wishes she **knew** OR **would know** how.
5. They are sentimental and melancholic and can't stop but wishing everthing **was** OR **would be** different.

3. Practise - what do you wish? Write your own

1. *past regret*

2. *present regret*

3. *wish to complain*

4. *wish for dreams*

5. *wish for hypothetical situation*

6. *wish for a state of being (inf.)*

7. *wish for a state of being (gerund)*