Wish and If Only Worksheet: Regrets About the Past

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NAME

DATE

Remember

Form	Example
wish / if only + past perfect: regret about the past	I wish I hadn't sold my guitar.
wish / if only + past simple: present situation	If only I had more time.
wish + could: ability now / could have: ability in the past	I wish I could come. I wish I could have helped.
wish + would: complaint about others' behaviour	I wish you would listen to me.

Typical mistakes

× Learners often say	✓ Say instead
I wish I didn't eat so much last night.	I wish I hadn't eaten so much last night.
If only I would have known.	If only I had known.
I wish I would be taller.	I wish I were taller.

1. Complete

Complete with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. I failed my exam. I wish I _____ (study) more.
2. I wish I _____ (be) on holiday right now.
3. If only you _____ (tell) me earlier! I could have helped.
4. I wish my neighbour _____ (stop) playing the drums at night.
5. She wishes she _____ (not / move) to such a cold city.
6. I wish I _____ (can) speak Italian. Then I'd understand this film.
7. If only we _____ (leave) earlier. We wouldn't be stuck in traffic now.
8. I wish I _____ (not / have to) work this weekend.

2. Choose

Circle the correct option.

1. I wish I (didn't say / hadn't said) that to her yesterday.
2. If only I (knew / had known) her number now.
3. I wish it (would / will) stop raining.
4. He wishes he (had taken / took) the job last year.
5. I wish I (could have gone / could go) to your wedding last month.
6. If only I (were / would be) a bit braver.
7. I wish you (wouldn't / don't) leave your shoes there.
8. She wishes she (hadn't / didn't) cut her hair so short last week.

3. Correct the mistakes

Each sentence has one mistake. Write it correctly.

1. I wish I didn't spend all my money last month.

2. If only I would have listened to you.

3. I wish I can play the piano.

4. I wish he will call me.

5. She wishes she has more friends.

6. If only I didn't forget her birthday yesterday!

Writing

Write 7 sentences about regrets and wishes: three about the past, two about the present and two complaints with would.

Speaking

- Is there anything you wish you had done differently at school?
- What do you wish you could change about your city?
- What is something people do that you wish they wouldn't?
- If only you had one more hour every day, what would you do?

Answer key

1. Complete: 1 had studied · 2 were / was · 3 had told · 4 would stop · 5 hadn't moved · 6 could · 7 had left · 8 didn't have to

2. Choose: 1 hadn't said · 2 knew · 3 would · 4 had taken · 5 could have gone · 6 were · 7 wouldn't · 8 hadn't

3. Correct the mistakes: 1 I wish I hadn't spent all my money last month. · 2 If only I had listened to you. · 3 I wish I could play the piano. · 4 I wish he would call me. · 5 She wishes she had more friends. · 6 If only I hadn't forgotten her birthday yesterday!

Writing, model answer: I wish I had learned English when I was a child. If only I hadn't sold my first car; it would be a classic now. I wish I had travelled more before I had children. I wish I lived closer to my parents. If only I had a garden. I wish my teenage son would put his phone down at dinner. And I wish politicians would keep their promises.