

Use of the Verb Wish for Past and Present Ideas

(Voice of America / Everyday Grammar)

☐ <https://learningenglish.voanews.com/a/everyday-grammar-wish-past-present/4211818.html>

This is Everyday Grammar. I'm Lucija.

And I'm Kaveh. Lucija, do you remember our last episode on wishes about the future?

Yeah, what about it?
(et alors?)

Well this episode is about wishes in the present and the past.
(souhaits, désirs)

Oh! I wish that I had prepared more!

The verb "wish" has many uses, but the main use is when the speaker wants reality to be different.
(emplois, utilisations) (usage principal)

When you are talking about regrets, about the past, you can use "wish" with the past perfect.

"Wish" + (that) + past perfect. You can leave out the word "that" if you want to.
(laisser / ne pas mettre)

- *I wish (that) I had studied harder at school.* = Meaning: *I didn't study hard at school and I am sorry about that.*

- *I wish that Sam had come with me on the trip.* = Meaning: *I went on the trip. Now I regret that Sam didn't come with me.*
(j'ai fait le voyage)

- *I wish you hadn't told me how the film ends.* = Meaning: *You told me how the film ends. I would be happier if you hadn't.*
(finit)

To use "wish" about the present, you can use the simple past.

I wish I knew a second language.

I wish I lived in Paris.

I wish it wasn't so cold!

But before we go, it's important to remember one thing: from all the many uses of "wish," in formal speaking and writing, you use the subjunctive form "were."

Not "was" after "wish." So you wouldn't say, "*I wish I was taller,*" but *I wish I were taller.*"

And that's Everyday Grammar.



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Exercise: fill in the blanks with the correct words

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