

# Unreal Uses of Past Tenses

In English Past Tenses do not always refer to a situation in the past. They can be used to refer to unreal situations in the present or future. Let's have a closer look at this.

## CASE 1 - IT'S TIME YOU DID SOMETHING

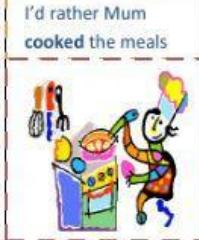


It's time Jack **went** on a diet

! You could also use **It's high time/ It's about time** to make the meaning more emphatic

- It's past midnight. It's time **you went** to bed.
- It's about time **the government reduced** taxes.

## CASE 2 - I'D RATHER YOU DID SOMETHING

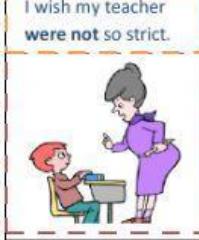


I'd rather Mum **cooked** the meals

! You should use **would rather + bare infinitive** when there is no change of the subject, e.g. **I'd rather not talk about this!**

- The roads are icy. I'd **rather you did not drive** now.
- Would you rather **we invited** our neighbors for dinner?

## CASE 3 - I WISH / IF ONLY

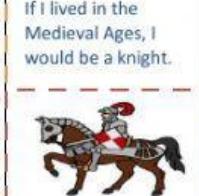


I wish my teacher **were not** so strict.

! With **wish**, you can use **I wish I were/ I wish he were** instead of **I wish I was/ I wish he was;**

- I wish **I had** his mobile phone number. I'd call him.
- I wish **he were not** such a boring person.

## CASE 4 - UNREAL CONDITIONS - 2<sup>nd</sup> CONDITIONAL



If I lived in the Medieval Ages, I would be a knight.

! Note that the main clause can contain **'would' 'could' or 'might'**.

- If **I were** you, I wouldn't go out with that girl.
- If **I had** free time, I would learn Spanish.

### Fill in the blanks with the correct verb form

1. Your job does not pay very well.

It's time you \_\_\_\_\_ (get) a better job.

2. - We can talk about it in the morning.

- I'd rather we \_\_\_\_\_ (discuss) this evening.

3. I have to drive 50 miles to see my girlfriend.

I wish she \_\_\_\_\_ (live) nearer.

4. The news are shocking.

I'd rather mum \_\_\_\_\_ (not know) about it!

5. I'm fed up with the cold weather.

If only I \_\_\_\_\_ (can) go on holiday in Egypt!

6. Would you rather we \_\_\_\_\_ (carry on) with the report tomorrow?

7. It's high time Josh \_\_\_\_\_ (get married). He is in his late forties now.

8. If only I \_\_\_\_\_ (can speak) perfect English. I would not be sitting in this class!

9. If I \_\_\_\_\_ (win) a million dollars, I would buy a car, probably a Ferrari.

10. I wish Tom \_\_\_\_\_ (not be) so lazy. He spends his time sleeping and eating instead of studying.

11. I am too tired to cook dinner this evening. I would rather we \_\_\_\_\_ (eat) in a restaurant for a change.

12. If you \_\_\_\_\_ (not be) so sensitive, you would not suffer so much!