

● Unreal past, wishes / contrast

Unreal past

Past tenses do not always refer to past time. In some sentences and with some verbs or phrases we use a past tense to refer to the present or the future or to a general situation. These include sentences that contain:

Structure	Example
a second conditional	<i>I'd buy that top if I had more cash on me.</i>
suppose / what if / imagine	<i>I know it's probably not going to happen but suppose / imagine I became a famous super model!</i> <i>I know it's probably not going to happen but what if I became a famous super model?</i>
would rather + you/he/she/we/they	<i>I'd rather you didn't come with me to the fashion show tomorrow.</i>
it's (high/about) time	<i>It's (high/about) time that hats came back in fashion.</i>
polite questions	<i>Did you want me to send you our new catalogue when it comes out?</i>
wish / if only	<i>If only / I wish I had something to wear tonight.</i>

Watch out!

- Suppose, what if and imagine can also be followed by a present tense. A present tense indicates that the situation is more likely to actually happen. A past tense indicates that the situation is less likely to actually happen.
 - ✓ What if you **are** accepted into art college? (more likely to happen)
 - ✓ What if you **were** accepted into art college? (less likely to happen)

Wishes

We use different structures with *wish* / *if only*, depending on exactly what we want to express.

Use	Structure	Example
Expressing wishes about the present, future or generally	<i>wish</i> / <i>if only</i> + past simple/continuous	<i>I wish I was studying history of fashion instead of biology!</i>
Expressing wishes about the past	<i>wish</i> / <i>if only</i> + past perfect simple/continuous	<i>If only I'd known Burton's was having a sale last week.</i>
Criticising other people or complaining about a situation now, in the future or generally	<i>wish</i> / <i>if only</i> + <i>would</i>	<i>If only Henry would get a haircut!</i>
Expressing hypothetical ability or permission now, in the future or generally	<i>wish</i> / <i>if only</i> + <i>could</i>	<i>I wish I could fit into these jeans.</i>
Expressing desires in a formal way	<i>wish</i> + full infinitive	<i>I wish to try on this ball gown.</i>

Watch out!

- We do not usually say *If only* / *I wish* I would ...
 - ✓ ***If only** / I **wish** I **had** enough money to buy these shoes.*
 - ✓ ***If only** / I **wish** I **could** afford these shoes.*
 - ✗ ~~***If only** / I **wish** I **would** have enough money to buy these shoes.*~~
- To express desires about the future, we often use *hope*.
 - ✓ ***I hope** I **will** have enough money to buy these shoes next week.*
 - ✓ ***I hope** to **have** enough money to buy these shoes next week.*
 - ✗ ~~***I wish** I **will** have enough money to buy these shoes next week.*~~

although / though / even though

Although, though and even though are used to express contrast. Even though is more emphatic than although and though. Though is more informal than although and even though.

Structure	Example
<i>Although / Though / Even though + subject + verb, subject + verb</i>	Although / Though / Even though I wore a hat, I got sunburn.
<i>subject + verb, although / though / even though + subject + verb</i>	I got sunburn, although / though / even though I wore a hat.

Watch out!

- *Though* can also come at the end of a sentence.
✓ I wore a hat. I got sunburn, *though*.

in spite of / despite

In spite of and despite are used to express contrast. They mean exactly the same thing and take the same grammatical structures:

Structure	Example
<i>in spite of / despite + -ing form, subject + verb</i>	In spite of / Despite wearing a hat, I got sunburn.
<i>in spite of / despite + the fact (that) + subject + verb, subject + verb</i>	In spite of / Despite the fact (that) I wore a hat, I got sunburn.
<i>in spite of / despite + noun, subject + verb</i>	In spite of / Despite my hat, I got sunburn.

Watch out!

- We can also put *in spite of / despite* in the middle of the sentence.
✓ I got sunburn **in spite of / despite** wearing a hat.
- We can also use the perfect -ing form to show that the action happened before the result.
✓ I got sunburn **in spite of / despite** **having** worn a hat.
- With *in spite of / despite + -ing form*, the subject of the main verb must also carry out the action of the -ing verb.
X *My sunburn was terrible in spite of / despite wearing a hat. (= My sunburn wore a hat!)*

however / nevertheless

However and nevertheless are used to express contrast. However is formal. Nevertheless is even more formal.

The fashion show was expensive to put on. **However / Nevertheless**, it did make a profit.

The fashion show was expensive to put on. It did make a profit, **however / nevertheless**.

The fashion show was expensive to put on. It did, **however / nevertheless**, make a profit.

while / whereas

While and whereas are used to contrast two different facts or ideas.

Structure	Example
<i>while / whereas + subject + verb, subject + verb</i>	While / Whereas jeans are worn by both men and women, blouses are worn only by women.
<i>subject + verb, while / whereas + subject + verb</i>	Blouses are worn only by women, while / whereas jeans are worn by both men and women.

A Complete using the correct form of the verb in brackets.

- 1 Don't you think it's time you (**tell**) Andrea the truth?
- 2 What if we (**rent**) a villa by the sea for the summer?
- 3 I'd rather people (**send**) me e-mails than (**phone**) me.
- 4 Suppose you (**be going to**) open a clothes shop. What kind of clothes would you stock?
- 5 It's time to (**go**) now.
- 6 If you (**have**) a time machine, which era would you want to go back to?
- 7 Shelia would come with us if she (**not have to**) work tomorrow.
- 8 We'd rather you (**not lend**) Brenda any more money – she's got to learn not to spend what she doesn't have.
- 9 It's high time I (**leave**).
- 10 What if we (**get**) married? Would that make you happy?

B Each of the words or phrases in bold is incorrect. Rewrite them correctly.

- 1 I wish I **know** how to set the timer on this video. Where are the instructions?
.....
- 2 'If only I **listened** to Hilary,' said Warren sadly. 'Now it's too late.'
- 3 I wish you **did** shut up for five minutes!
- 4 If only Charlie **can** get tomorrow off work.
- 5 Do you wish you **went** with Jack to the concert tomorrow night?
- 6 Excuse me. I wish **speaking** with the manager of this establishment immediately.
.....
- 7 Albert wishes like anything that he **was driving** more slowly that night.
.....
- 8 I wish I **would feel** well enough to eat something.
- 9 I **wish** I'll get my exam results sooner rather than later.
- 10 If only you **to listen** to what your teachers tell you!

C Choose the correct answer.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 It's about time you thinking about setting up your own business.
A start
B have started
C started
D to start 2 I'd really rather you the kids drop bits of pizza all over my new sofa.
A don't let
B aren't letting
C won't let
D didn't let 3 anything particular in mind or are you just browsing?
A Did you have
B Are you having
C Can you have
D Had you had | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4 I wish Karen that we're not trying to interfere in her life.
A understands
B would understand
C has understood
D is going to understand 5 I'd have been able to say goodbye to Trish if only to the airport in time.
A I get
B I got
C I have got
D I had got 6 Don't you sometimes wish you invisible?
A could be
B would be
C will be
D are |
|---|---|

- 7 Suppose we we could go and live on another planet. Would you want to go?
A to hear
B hearing
C heard
D having heard
- 8 Do you wish an official complaint?
A making
B to make
C you made
D you make
- 9 Adrian was enough money to buy a new computer for the school.
A wishing to have raised
B wishing he will raise
C hoping to have raised
D hoping he will raise
- 10 Don't you wish we the exam a week on Monday and not tomorrow?
A take
B will take
C would take
D were taking

D Complete the sentences so that the meaning remains the same.

- 1 I don't like your criticising me all the time.
I wish
- 2 It's awful – Sam doesn't know how I feel about him!
If only
- 3 I'd love to be with you in Switzerland right now.
I wish
- 4 Frank regrets not taking the job when he had the chance.
Frank wishes
- 5 Wouldn't you like us to be standing in the middle of Times Square right now?
Don't you wish
- 6 It's a shame I can't play chess as well as Steve.
I wish
- 7 What would you do if you had a million euros?
Suppose
- 8 I don't really want you to smoke in here.
I'd rather
- 9 It's time for them to go to bed.
It's high time

E Match to make sentences.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Although | A of being a vegetarian, Aesop does occasionally eat fish. |
| 2 Despite | B does occasionally eat fish. |
| 3 Despite the | C Aesop does occasionally eat fish. |
| 4 Aesop is a vegetarian, | D being a vegetarian, Aesop does occasionally eat fish. |
| 5 Despite his vegetarianism, | E occasionally eat fish, however. |
| 6 In spite | F Aesop's a vegetarian, he does occasionally eat fish. |
| 7 Despite having | G been a vegetarian for years, Aesop does occasionally eat fish. |
| 8 Aesop is a vegetarian. However, he | H fact that Aesop is a vegetarian, he does occasionally eat fish. |
| 9 Aesop is a vegetarian. He does | I although he does occasionally eat fish. |

F Complete using *although*, *despite*, *however* or *while*.

- 1 the storm, over ten thousand people took part in the marathon.
- 2 I wrote myself a note to remind me, I still forgot to call George tonight.
- 3 Most Egyptologists believe that the Sphinx is about 4000 years old. Some geologists, , argue that it must be at least 14,000 years old.
- 4 having taken two aspirin, I had such a bad headache that I had to go home.
- 5 I've never seen a UFO. , that doesn't mean that I don't believe in them.
- 6 There are still two million people unemployed the fact that we're in the middle of an economic boom.
- 7 no European country carries out capital punishment, it is widely used throughout the United States.
- 8 Technology has benefited humankind enormously. There are drawbacks with our reliance on technology,
- 9 I couldn't find my keys searching for them everywhere.

G Complete each second sentence using the word given, so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Write between two and five words in each gap.

- 1 Although he was exhausted, Mike kept on climbing. **fact**
In he was exhausted, Mike kept on climbing.
- 2 Sally had been sure she would win the music competition. She came third, however. **been**
Despite would win the music competition, Sally came third.
- 3 Doug wasn't shortlisted for the job even though he had a great CV. **spite**
Doug wasn't shortlisted for the job a great CV.
- 4 Planes can still take off and land but ferries have been cancelled. **whereas**
Ferries have been cancelled, able to take off and land.
- 5 Despite having got a good degree, Sandra couldn't find a well-paid job. **even**
Sandra couldn't find a well-paid job a good degree.
- 6 Even though he'd been robbed twice, Red still enjoyed living in the city. **having**
Red still enjoyed living in the city twice.
- 7 It's a great film despite the plot being a little complicated. **though**
It's a great film, a little complicated.
- 8 Despite looking everywhere, the kids failed to find the tennis ball. **although**
The kids failed to find the tennis ball everywhere.
- 9 Pat really enjoyed the match even though she was beaten. **of**
In , Pat really enjoyed the match.
- 10 Despite their thorough investigation of the case, the police didn't manage to catch the culprit. **investigated**
Despite , the police didn't manage to catch the culprit.

- H** If a line is correct, put a tick (✓) next to the number. If there is an extra word in a line, write it next to the number.

The school dance

- 1 I went to my first school dance last Saturday night and it was a disaster! If
- 2 only that I'd thought about what I was going to wear a bit more carefully. Although
- 3 being my best friend Jenny had told me it wasn't that kind of event, I'd decided
- 4 to look really grown-up and wear a dress and high-heeled shoes. When I got
- 5 there, I looked totally ridiculous and some people started laughing. Despite of
- 6 this slight setback, I thought I'd hit the dance floor. If I could have survive that,
- 7 I could survive anything. But even though that went wrong! One of my heels
- 8 snapped – even if though my shoes were brand new – and I had to carry them
- 9 to the side of the room. It was very embarrassing! Still, despite the disastrous
- 10 start was, Craig Fielding came up to me and asked me if I wanted to go out with him next Saturday. Of course I said no, but he is cute! We'll see what happens!

- I** Write one word in each gap.

On the Catwalk

with Sunny Magenta

(1) the fact that I try to be as upbeat as possible in this column, I have to say Milan has disappointed me. If only we (2) possibly go back to the glory days of fashion (ie last year) when skirts were short and pink was the new black. Pink is still in this year, interestingly enough. (3) , it's only being used in accessories such as buckles, belts, braces and beads. Brown – the must-have colour of the season – has never been my favourite colour, (4) I have to say that Belinda Steven's all-brown paper beachwear was quite stunning. That's in (5) of its complete impracticality, of course. It really is (6) time that haute couture entered the real world just a tiny bit. I know it's supposed to be more art than clothing, but suppose you actually (7) the mistake of buying a Diego Fernandez baseball cap made of candle wax. That's one walk in the sunshine and five thousand euros is dripping down your face! Now, I'm not saying I wish I (8) stayed back in dull and grey London – the after-show parties were tremendous, as always. But I do hope that next season I (9) be able to report that the fashion world's got a grip on itself once more, and then – (10) though none of us will ever be able to afford any of the items I describe in this column – at least we'll have something to dream about once more.