

Points to
remember

- ① He speaks as if he were a lawyer. (He isn't.) ✓
He speaks as if he is a lawyer. (He isn't.) →
He spoke as if he had known me for years. (He didn't.) ✓
He spoke as if he knew me for years. (He didn't.) →
(as if + Past Perfect refers to unreal situations in the past.)
- ② He acts as if he was rich. = He acts as if he were rich.
She wishes she was rich. = She wishes she were rich.
(were can be used instead of was in all persons in Unreal Past.)
- ③ I wish to speak to the principal. ✓
(= I want to speak to the principal).
I wish you to speak to the principal. →
(wish + full infinitive = want; the subject of wish must be the same as the subject of the infinitive.)
- ④ I wish I smoked / could smoke less. ✓
I wish you smoked / could smoke less. ✓
I wish you smoke less. →
(wish + unreal past / could + infinitive; the subject of wish can be the same as or different from the subject of the second verb.)
- ⑤ I wish you would smoke less. ✓
I wish I would smoke less. →
(wish + would + infinitive; the subject of wish must be different from the subject of would.)
- ⑥ I would rather (not) stay at home tonight. ✓
I would rather not to stay at home tonight. →
I would rather not staying at home tonight. →
I would rather (not) have stayed at home yesterday. ✓
I would rather stay at home yesterday. →
I would rather not had stayed at home yesterday. →
(would rather + present bare infinitive refers to the present/future
would rather + perfect bare infinitive refers to the past
The subject of would rather is the same as the subject of the second verb.)
- ⑦ I would rather we stayed/didn't stay at home tonight. ✓
I would rather I didn't stay at home tonight. →
I would rather we had (not) stayed at home yesterday. ✓
- ⑧ I would rather I hadn't stayed at home yesterday. →
(would rather + Past Simple refers to the present/future
would rather + Past Perfect refers to the past
The subject of would rather is different from the subject of the second verb.)
- ⑨ I prefer coffee to tea. ✓
He prefers swimming to scuba diving. ✓
He prefers swimming from scuba diving. →
(prefer + noun/-ing form to noun/-ing form = general preference)
- ⑩ He prefers/would prefer to swim rather than scuba dive. ✓
He prefers/would prefer to swim rather than to scuba dive. →
(prefer/would prefer + full infinitive rather than + bare infinitive)
- ⑪ He would rather swim than scuba dive. ✓
He would rather to swim than scuba dive. →
He would rather swim to scuba dive. →
(would rather + bare infinitive + than + bare infinitive).
- ⑫ You had better see a doctor. ✓
I'd rather you saw a doctor. ✓
I had better you saw a doctor. →
(The subject of had better must be the same as that of the verb.)
- ⑬ You had better see a doctor. ✓
You had better to see a doctor. →
(had better + present bare infinitive refers to the present/future)
- ⑭ You should have seen a doctor. ✓
It would have been better if you had seen a doctor. ✓
You had better have seen a doctor. →
(It would have been better if + Past Perfect refers to the past)
- ⑮ It's time we bought a new car. ✓
It's time we buy a new car. →
It's time for us to buy a new car. ✓
It's about / high time we bought a new car. ✓
It's about / high time for us to buy a new car. →
(It's time + unreal past = for sb + full infinitive;
it's high/about time + unreal past)

Key Transformations

- ① I wish / If only you didn't/wouldn't speak so loudly.
I would rather/sooner you didn't/wouldn't speak so loudly.
I would prefer it if you didn't speak so loudly.
- ② I wish / If only we had hired a car.
I would rather/sooner we had hired a car.
I would have preferred it if we had hired a car.
I would prefer us to have hired a car.
It's a pity we didn't hire a car.
We regret not hiring/having hired a car.
- ③ You ought to/had better/should wash the dishes now.
I wish / If only you washed the dishes now.
- ④ It's (about/high) time you washed the dishes.
It's time for you to wash the dishes.
- ⑤ She pretended to be working.
She acted as if / as though she were working.
If you saw her, you would think that she was working.
If you had seen her, you would have thought that she was working.
By her behaviour, you would assume that she was working.
- ⑥ He prefers going out to watching TV.
He prefers to go out rather than watch TV.
He would prefer to go out rather than watch TV.
He would rather/sooner go out than watch TV.