

Look through the rules

hypothetical conditional: past

The most common conditional sentences refer to permanent facts (zero conditional), future possibility (first conditional) or imaginary situations (second conditional).

hypothetical conditional: past (third conditional)

Use to talk about something that could have happened, but didn't, or should not have happened, but did.

If I hadn't eaten that shellfish, I would have been fine.

other forms with a third conditional meaning

Supposing you'd met the president, what would you have said?

Imagine you'd missed the flight, what would you have done?

In more formal contexts, it is possible to replace *if* by inverting the subject and *had*. *Had I known her, I would have said hello.*

Or replace *if* with *but for* + noun (+ gerund)

But for Wilkinson's heroics, they would have lost the match.

mixed conditional

Use to say how, if something had been different in the past, the present or future would be different.

If she'd listened to me, she wouldn't be in debt now.

regrets

Use *regret* + gerund, *if only* + past perfect or *wish* + past perfect to say we want something in the past to have been different.

I regret going out last night.

If only I hadn't left the oven on.

He wishes he'd gone to university.

Use *if only* + past simple or *wish* + past simple to say we want something to be different now.

If only we had some matches!

I wish you were here.

Note: After *if only* and *wish*, we often use *were* instead of *was*.

Were is considered more correct in formal English, although *was* is often used in spoken English.

Use *if only* + *would* or *wish* + *would* to show we are annoyed by something now.

If only you'd be more sensible!

I wish you would be quiet!

1. Complete these sentences so they mean the same but with the words in brackets

- 1 We gambled on red. We lost.
(If/won) _____.
- 2 They only asked him to the party because he's famous.
(wouldn't) _____.
- 3 The boys feel bad about borrowing your car.
(regret) _____.
- 4 She didn't know you were a vegetarian! She bought fish!
(Had) _____.
- 5 I forgot my keys. Now we're locked out!
(If only/wouldn't) _____.
- 6 I'm working in a boring, low-paid job. I shouldn't have dropped out of university.
(If) _____.
- 7 Ahmed is sorry he didn't speak to you before you left.
(wishes) _____.
- 8 He had an injury. We would have won otherwise.
(But for) _____.

2. Read the text and complete the gaps with correct answer (a,b,c,d) - write the correct letter into the gap

Regrets – just a few

President Theodore Roosevelt once said, 'The only time you really live fully is from thirty to sixty. The young are slaves to dreams; the old [are] servants of regrets.' Indeed, it's often claimed that young people wish they ¹ _____ the things they did and old people regret not doing the things they didn't do.

A very informal poll among friends and acquaintances for this column reveals that people generally regret ² _____ (more) children, choosing the wrong career and missing out on the man or woman of their dreams. Then there are the odd, individual cases.

A close friend said, 'I wish ³ _____ become a vegetarian earlier. ⁴ _____ I done so, over the years I'd have saved about 400 chickens, 50 pigs and 30 cows.'

Another pal said, 'If I ⁵ _____ such an idiot when I was eighteen, I'd never have had this tattoo done. Imagine spending your whole life with a picture of your ex-girlfriend on your arm. If only it ⁶ _____ Mother Teresa or someone who deserves to be there!'

I spoke to an ex-professional footballer whose career was cut short by injury. 'If I'd been smarter, I ⁷ _____ put all my eggs in one basket. I ⁸ _____ at least finished school. Aged twenty-seven, I had no qualifications apart from kicking a ball.'

Of my elderly contacts, about half wished ⁹ _____ followed their passion instead of taking the safe option. One grandfather-of-fifteen said, 'I might ¹⁰ _____ a good actor, but at the time I had a big family to support and acting isn't a secure profession. So I became a bank clerk and spent the rest of my life cashing other people's cheques.'

As an antidote to all this doom and gloom, another friend cheerfully said, 'Regrets? If only we ¹¹ _____ how good life is.' Then he told me that people should make lists of all the friends they've had, the places they've seen, the things they've enjoyed. 'I wish everyone ¹² _____ the good things in life!' he said and drained his cup of tea in one gulp.

- 1 a) hadn't been doing b) hadn't done c) are doing
d) have done
- 2 a) to have b) of not having c) not having
d) not to have
- 3 a) I was b) I'm c) I've d) I'd
- 4 a) If b) Had c) Have d) Should
- 5 a) hadn't been b) had been c) didn't be
d) not been
- 6 a) were b) was being c) 's been d) wasn't
- 7 a) didn't b) wouldn't c) wouldn't have
d) would have
- 8 a) have b) must have c) would d) 'd have
- 9 a) they'd b) they c) they did d) they'd been
- 10 a) have been becoming b) have become
c) had become d) become
- 11 a) realise b) can realise c) realised
d) are realising
- 12 a) has appreciated b) is appreciating
c) appreciates d) would appreciate