




# 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 <b>went</b> on a diet	! You could also use <i>It's high time/ It's about time</i> to make the meaning more emphatic
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>It's past midnight. It's time <b>you went</b> to bed.</li><li>It's about time <b>the government reduced</b> taxes.</li></ul>


Fill in the blanks with the correct verb form

- Your job does not pay very well.  
It's time you \_\_\_\_\_ (get) a better job.
- We can talk about it in the morning.  
- I'd rather we \_\_\_\_\_ (discuss) this evening.
- I have to drive 50 miles to see my girlfriend.  
I wish she \_\_\_\_\_ (live) nearer.
- The news are shocking.  
I'd rather mum \_\_\_\_\_ (not know) about it!
- I'm fed up with the cold weather.  
If only I \_\_\_\_\_ (can) go on holiday in Egypt!
- Would you rather we \_\_\_\_\_ (carry on) with the report tomorrow?
- It's high time Josh \_\_\_\_\_ (get married). He is in his late forties now.
- If only I \_\_\_\_\_ (can speak) perfect English. I would not be sitting in this class!
- If I \_\_\_\_\_ (win) a million dollars, I would buy a car, probably a Ferrari.
- I wish Tom \_\_\_\_\_ (not be) so lazy. He spends his time sleeping and eating instead of studying.
- I am too tired to cook dinner this evening. I would rather we \_\_\_\_\_ (eat) in a restaurant for a change.
- If you \_\_\_\_\_ (not be) so sensitive, you would not suffer so much!


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

I'd rather Mum <b>cooked</b> the meals	! You should use <i>would rather + bare infinitive</i> when there is no change of the subject, e.g. <i>I'd rather not talk about this!</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The roads are icy. I'd <b>rather you did not drive</b> now.</li><li>Would you rather <b>we invited</b> our neighbors for dinner?</li></ul>

## CASE 3 - I WISH / IF ONLY

I wish my teacher <b>were not</b> so strict.	! With <i>wish</i> , you can use <i>I wish I were/ I wish he were</i> instead of <i>I wish I was/ I wish he was</i> .
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>I wish <b>I had</b> his mobile phone number. I'd call him.</li><li>I wish <b>he were not</b> such a boring person.</li></ul>

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

If I lived in the Medieval Ages, I <b>would be</b> a knight.	! Note that the main clause can contain <i>'would' 'could' or 'might'</i> .
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If <b>I were</b> you, I wouldn't go out with that girl.</li><li>If <b>I had</b> free time, I would learn Spanish.</li></ul>