# UNREAL PAST

The unreal past refers to the use of:

- The **past simple** or **continuous** to talk about situations that are not real in the present or in the future.
- the **past perfect simple** or **continuous** to talk about a hypothetical past that never actually happened

Some constructions that need the unreal past:

- 2nd and 3rd conditional
- Supposing / Imagine / What if
- I wish / if only
- would rather / would sooner * - to show preference
- It's (about / high) time** - to say that something has to be done now or in the near future
- As if / As though - for hypothetical comparisons about the present or future

In the case of the verb **TO BE**, we use **were** for all subject pronouns. Ex: I wish I *were* ~~was~~ taller.

*We use the unreal past when there is a change of subject. *Ex: He'd rather I helped him*. When there is no change of subject, we use the infinitive **without to**. *Ex: I'd rather eat in tonight.*

** We use the infinitive with to when there is no urgency. *Ex: Come on! It's time (for you) to start the lesson.*

Complete the sentences with the correct unreal past.

1. If only I _____ (study) harder at school, I'd have a better job now.
2. My brother looked as if he _____ (not sleep) for weeks.
3. He said he'd tidy up my bedroom as long as I _____ (not tell) mum and dad where he had been the night before.
4. It's about time I _____ (move) out of my parents' house.
5. She would rather he _____ (not call) her any more.
6. She spends money as if she _____ (make) double what she makes.
7. He'd rather we _____ (stay) with him than in a hotel when we were in France.
8. It's high time we _____ (do) something about climate change.
9. We would have never made it if it _____ (not be) for your help.
10. It's too late now, but I'd rather you _____ (speak) to me first.
11. I'd rather _____ (not take) the exam. I feel I'm not prepared enough.
12. Suppose you _____ (win) the final match, how would you celebrate?
13. I wish I _____ (not argue) with her, now she won't talk to me again.
14. She looks so upset. She looks as though she _____ (cry).
15. What if you _____ (not go) to university? You wouldn't be working here now.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

For Questions 1-12, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between 2 and 5 words.

1. I'd love to know how John is getting on. **KNEW**
I _____ how John was getting on.

2. I got all wet because I didn't take an umbrella with me. **HAVE**
If I hadn't forgotten my umbrella, I _____ all wet.

3. I think taxes should be increased. **TIME**
It _____ increased.

4. He behaves like the President of the company. **THOUGH**
He acts _____ the President of the company.

5. I regret not inviting Cathy to the party. **ONLY**
If _____ Cathy to the party.

6. I'd prefer you to get home early tonight. **RATHER**
I _____ home early tonight.

7. It's a pity the car is so expensive. **WISH**
I _____ so expensive.

8. It will be better for you to come alone. **SOONER**
I would _____ on your own.

9. I'm sorry my office doesn't get any sun. **WOULD**
I _____ some sun.

10. You should really have your hair cut. **HIGH**
It's _____ your hair cut.

11. She'd like to rent a car but I'm keener on using public transport. **USE**
She'd like to rent a car but _____ public transport.

12. Do you want me to help you now or later? **RATHER**
_____ you now or later?

LIVEWORKSHEETS