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

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

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.*~~

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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
Although / Though / Even though + subject + verb, subject + verb	***Although / Though / Even though*** *I wore a hat, I got sunburn.*
subject + verb, *although / though / even though* + subject + verb	*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
in spite of / despite + *-ing* form, subject + verb	***In spite of / Despite*** *wearing a hat, I got sunburn.*
in spite of / despite + *the fact (that)* + subject + verb, subject + verb	***In spite of / Despite*** *the fact (that) I wore a hat, I got sunburn.*
in spite of / despite + noun, subject + verb	***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.
  ✗ ~~*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
while / whereas + subject + verb, subject + verb	***While / Whereas*** *jeans are worn by both men and women, blouses are worn only by women.*
subject + verb, *while / whereas* + subject + verb	*Blouses are worn only by women,* ***while / whereas*** *jeans are worn by both men and women.*

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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.

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

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

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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 .....
2 Despite .....
3 Despite the .....
4 Aesop is a vegetarian, ...
5 Despite his vegetarianism, ...
6 In spite .....
7 Despite having .....
8 Aesop is a vegetarian. However, he .....
9 Aesop is a vegetarian. He does .....

A of being a vegetarian, Aesop does occasionally eat fish.
B does occasionally eat fish.
C Aesop does occasionally eat fish.
D being a vegetarian, Aesop does occasionally eat fish.
E occasionally eat fish, however.
F Aesop's a vegetarian, he does occasionally eat fish.
G been a vegetarian for years, Aesop does occasionally eat fish.
H fact that Aesop is a vegetarian, he does occasionally eat fish.
I although he does occasionally eat fish.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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.

LIVEWORKSHEETS