UNIT 13

Grammar

Unreal time

- Sometimes we use the past simple and continuous to refer to the present, the future or a general situation.
- Sometimes we use the past perfect simple and continuous to refer to a hypothetical past that didn't actually happen.

Watch out!

- For all of the situations below with the past simple and past continuous, with the verb *to be* after *I* and *he/she/it*, there is a choice of *was* or *were*. ✓ *I wish I* ***was*** *rich.* ✓ *I wish I* ***were*** *rich.*
- Both *was* and *were* are common in informal English but *were* is sometimes more appropriate in formal, written English and is always used in the phrase *If I were you ...*

Conditionals

For hypothetical and unlikely current, future or general conditions (see Unit 11 for more information)	*I wouldn't accept a job unless I* ***was*** *absolutely sure what the salary was.* *If you* ***were travelling*** *to Russia, would you get roubles before you left or when you arrived?*
For hypothetical past conditions (see Unit 11 for more information)	*If I* ***had known****, I would have taken some dollars with me.* *If I* ***had been running*** *the bank, I would have given you an overdraft!*

imagine / what if / suppose / supposing

To consider hypothetical or unlikely current, future or general situations	*Supposing you* ***were given*** *ten million euros, what would you spend it on?* *What if you* ***were walking*** *down the street and you suddenly found a wallet? Would you hand it in?*
To consider hypothetical or unlikely past situations	*Suppose you* ***had won*** *the lottery last night. What would you have done?* *Imagine you****'d been working*** *there for 40 years. What kind of pension would you have got?*

Watch out!

We can also use a present tense instead of past simple or past continuous after these words and phrases. This indicates that the situation is more likely to happen.
✓ *Supposing you* ***become*** *a millionaire, how will it change your life?* (more likely)
✓ *Supposing you* ***became*** *a millionaire, how would it change your life?* (less likely)

as if / as though

For current, future or general untrue, hypothetical comparisons	*She acts as if/though she* ***was*** *a millionaire.* *Colin acts as if/though he* ***were making*** *a million pounds a month.*
For past untrue, hypothetical comparisons	*Tony looks as if/though someone* ***had*** *just* ***handed*** *him a million euros.* *It's almost as if/though they****'d been working*** *for free.*

Watch out!

- When the verb before *as if/though* is in a present or present perfect tense, we only use a past tense for comparisons that we know aren't true. ✓ *She behaves as if she* ***were*** *really wealthy.* (= She's not really wealthy.)
- When the verb before *as if/though* is in a present or present perfect tense, for comparisons that are possible, we use a present or present perfect tense after *as if/though*.
  ✓ *She looks as if she****'s*** *really wealthy.* (= It's very possible that she is wealthy.)
- When the verb before *as if/though* is in a past tense, we use a past tense after *as if/though* for comparisons that are either true or hypothetical.
  ✓ *She* ***looked*** *as if she* ***was*** *really wealthy but I knew she wasn't / so maybe she was.*

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Questions and requests

To make questions and requests more polite	*How much money **did you want** to spend, madam?* *I **was wondering** whether you might be able to give me some advice.*

it's (high/about) time

To suggest that something should be done now or in the immediate future	*It's (high/about) time I **got** a mortgage.* *It's (high/about) time we **were leaving**.*

Watch out!

- With *It's (high/about) time*, there is often no real difference in meaning between past simple and past continuous.
  ✓ *It's time I **went** home.* ✓ *It's time I **was going** home.*
- We can also use a full infinitive after *It's time*, but not after *It's high/about time.*
  ✓ ***It's time to think** about getting a loan.*

would rather/sooner

For current, general or future preference	*Jan would rather/sooner we **bought** a house than **carried** on renting.* *Would you rather/sooner I **was begging** in the streets?*
For past preference	*We'd rather/sooner you **hadn't lent** Kurdip the money.*

Watch out!

Would rather/sooner + past simple/continuous is only used to talk about preference regarding someone else. When there is no change of subject, we use *would rather/sooner* + bare infinitive, or *would prefer* + full infinitive.
✓ ***She'd rather** not **borrow** any money from you.* ✓ ***She'd prefer** not **to borrow** any money from you.*

wish / if only

Wishes about now, the future or generally	*Do you wish you **had** a bigger house?* *If only I **was earning** a reasonable salary.*
Wishes about the past	*If only I'**d bought** a lottery ticket this morning.* *Carla wished she'**d been keeping** a much closer eye on her investments.*

Watch out!

When *wish* is in the past simple, it is still followed by the past simple or past continuous for current, future or general wishes.
✓ *Simon dearly **wished** that he **had** a bigger house.* ✓ *I sat there and **wished** I **was earning** a reasonable salary.*

Other structures with wish / if only

To criticise other people or wish for a situation to be different	*Wish / If only + would*	*I wish they **would** offer me a pay rise.*
Wishes about ability or permission	*Wish / If only + could*	*I wish I **could** find a job that pays well.*
Wishes about past ability or permission	*Wish / If only + could + perfect infinitive*	*I wish I **could have got** a mortgage with a fixed interest rate.*
To express desires in a very formal way	*Wish + full infinitive*	*I wish **to speak** to the bank manager.*
To wish someone luck/happiness/success/etc	*Wish + noun*	*I wish him every **success**.*

Watch out!

- We do not usually use *would* when the subject of *wish* is the same as the subject of *would.*
  ✗ ~~***Pete** wishes **he would earn more.***~~
- We do not use *wish* to express desires about a real, possible future. ✓ *Pete wishes he earnt / could earn more.*
- We can use *hope* instead.
  ✗ ~~*I **wish** the cheque arrives tomorrow.*~~ ✓ *I **hope** the cheque arrives tomorrow.*

LIVEWORKSHEETS

A **Write the verbs in brackets in the correct form in each gap.**

The importance of nothing

There is a lateral thinking question which asks: 'If the Romans (**1**) ..... (**have**) all the technology we have today, why would they not have been able to get to the moon?' (**2**) ..... (**we / be**) to think about this logically, we would probably be unable to come up with a satisfactory reason. However, with lateral thinking, there is a perfectly reasonable explanation. (**3**) ..... (**the Romans / be**) as technologically advanced as we are, they would indeed be stuck here on Earth. Why? Because if, 2,000 years ago, they (**4**) ..... (**employ**) a Roman centurion to count down their Roman space rocket, he would have started at ten (in Latin, of course), got down to one and then stopped. The Romans had no word for 'zero', so there would have been no 'Lift-off!'

Of course, the truth is that if these hypothetical Romans (**5**) ..... (**have**) the number 'zero', it would be impossible for them to have all our technology. If the concept of zero (**6**) ..... (**develop**), we would not have computers today. Modern maths and physics relies absolutely on there being a numeral to represent nothingness. It may seem obvious to us now that zero should exist, but many philosophers in the past were very uncomfortable with the idea. The ancient Greeks tied themselves in logical knots by stating: 'If nothing (**7**) ..... (**be**) a number, then it would be something. And if it (**8**) ..... (**do**) become something, then it would no longer be nothing.' If it (**9**) ..... (**be**) for an Indian mathematician called Brahmagupta, who knows what would have happened? He wrote the earliest known text stating that zero was a number. If he (**10**) ..... (**do**), we might not have set foot on the moon either.

B **Write the verbs in brackets in the correct form in each gap to make hypothetical situations.**

1 Supposing you ..... (**have**) the chance to spend a year in space, would you take it?
2 What if we ..... (**decide**) to run away right now and never come back?
3 Suppose all your friends ..... (**say**) bad things about you behind your back and you found out. What would you do?
4 Imagine you ..... (**have**) any money or any means of getting any. What on earth could you do?
5 What if the Internet ..... (**invent**)? Wouldn't that be weird?
6 Supposing the sun ..... (**stop**) shining right now, how long would it take for us to realise?
7 Imagine we ..... (**just / tell**) that a huge meteor was on its way to Earth. What would be the best thing to do?
8 Suppose you ..... (**can**) travel back in time. Where would you go?
9 What if everyone in the world ..... (**speak**) the same language?
10 Suppose it ..... (**prove**) that aliens existed and were living among us!
11 I do realise it'll probably never happen but imagine her song ..... (**become**) really popular!
12 What if you ..... (**give**) three wishes by a genie in a bottle? What would you wish for?
13 Supposing you ..... (**wake**) up one morning and found you'd gone back in time, how would you feel?
14 I know we can't travel faster than the speed of light but suppose for a moment that we ..... (**be**) able to.
15 Imagine that humans ..... (**can**) speak. How do you think we'd communicate?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

C **Look at the questions that follow each sentence and circle the answer, A, B or C which is *not* correct.**

1 Why do you always act as if you were better than everyone else, John?
Is John better than everyone else?
A Yes, he is.
B No, he isn't.
C He might think he is.

2 Rod often acts as if he had lots of brothers and sisters.
Does Rod have lots of brothers and sisters?
A Yes, he does.
B No, he doesn't.
C He could have but we don't know.

3 They look as if they've been running fast.
Have they been running fast?
A Yes, they're probably sweating.
B No, they haven't.
C They could well have been.

4 There's no need to be frightened of him. Just treat him as if you didn't know he'd spent some time in prison.
Do you know about the time he spent in prison?
A Yes, you do.
B No, you know nothing about it.
C You probably do.

5 It was scary! At one point, it felt like we weren't ever going to get out of that jungle alive.
How did you feel in the jungle?
A You would get out of it easily.
B You would possibly die in the jungle.
C You didn't know if you would survive the jungle or not.

6 Sara looked as if she had just woken up.
How did Sara look?
A She looked tired and she wasn't wearing her make-up.
B She certainly hadn't just woken up then.
C She could possibly just have looked tired but got up a lot earlier.

D **Write the verbs in brackets in the correct form in each gap. When a situation is hypothetical or unlikely, use unreal tenses.**

1 Dave talks as though he ..... (**grow up**) in the UK, but he actually only moved here three months ago.
2 I was such a mess when I got home I looked as if I ..... (**drag**) through a hedge backwards!
3 It was such a bad case of flu that I honestly felt as if I ..... (**go**) to die.
4 When I saw Corin on TV last night, it felt as if he ..... (**do**) chat shows for ages. I can't believe this was his first one!
5 Hardip looked as if he ..... (**have**) the worst possible news. In fact, he'd failed his finals.
6 Don't you think Maria sometimes looks as though she..... (**wish**) she'd been born in another century?
7 Rupert often dresses as though he ..... (**roll**) in money but he's actually on the dole.
8 You kids are behaving as if it ..... (**be**) a school night. It is, you know!
9 How can you sit there as if nothing ..... (**happen**)?

E **Make each of these statements or questions as polite as possible by using past tenses.**

1 What time ..... (**you, want**) to be woken tomorrow morning?
2 I ..... (**look**) for an engagement present for a young couple.
3 We ..... (**wonder**) whether you ..... (**want**) to go out this evening.
4 Excuse me, sir. ..... (**you, plan**) to park there for long?
5 ..... (**you, wish**) to see me about something, Mr Patel?
6 ..... (**you, look**) for anything in particular?
7 ..... (**you, want**) milk and sugar in your tea?
8 I ..... (**hope**) you ..... (**give**) me a hand tomorrow.
9 How long ..... (**you, intend**) to stay here?
10 I ..... (**wonder**) if you ..... (**pay**) by credit card, madam.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

F **Write a verb from the box in the correct form in each gap.**

allow • buy • call • do • get up • give • go • learn • look • make • start • stop

1 It's high time you ..... smoking. It's a disgusting habit!
2 It's time you ..... for a job, young man!
3 I think it's time we ..... a new carpet. This one's got holes in it!
4 It's time for you kids ..... your homework.
5 It's about time the government ..... listening to the views of ordinary people.
6 Wake up, Bonnie. It's time ..... now.
7 Don't you think it's time you ..... a pay rise?
8 It's time for you ..... a partner in the firm; you've been with them for over eight years, after all.
9 It's definitely time I ..... to stay out after ten o'clock at night.
10 It's time for us ..... now, Sammy. Are you ready?
11 Isn't it about time you ..... to drive?
12 Is it a good time ..... Aunty Audrey? What time is it in Australia?

G **Write a word or short phrase in each gap so that each second sentence has a similar meaning to the first sentence.**

1 We'd prefer the successful candidate to have previous experience in the field.
We'd rather the successful candidate ..... previous experience in the field.

2 Would you prefer me to come back later?
Would you rather ..... later?

3 To be honest, I'd prefer you not to tell anyone about this.
To be honest, I'd rather ..... anyone about this.

4 I'd prefer us to get a new kitchen rather than go on an expensive holiday.
I'd sooner ..... a new kitchen than ..... on an expensive holiday.

5 Dad said he'd prefer Brian to be living nearer home and I agree with him.
Dad said he'd rather Brian ..... nearer home and I agree with him.

6 I would prefer her to be sent on a training course rather than sacked.
I would rather ..... on a training course than sacked.

7 I'd prefer us not to talk about this right now, if you don't mind.
I'd sooner ..... about this right now, if you don't mind.

8 Of course I would have preferred you to tell me the truth!
Of course I would rather ..... me the truth!

9 I think Jeanne would definitely prefer to have a traditional wedding.
I think Jeanne would definitely rather ..... a traditional wedding.

10 We would have preferred them not to have stayed so long, that's true.
We would sooner ..... so long, that's true.

H **Circle the correct word or phrase. If both are correct, circle both.**

1 All of my friends have got mobiles. I wish I **have / had** one too!
2 Don't you sometimes wish you **ran / were running** this company?
3 If only we **didn't leave / hadn't left** the map at home!
4 If only we **don't / didn't** have to go to school tomorrow!
5 I do wish the bus **came / would come**. I'm going to be late.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

6 Do you ever wish that you **sang / could sing** really well?
7 There's only really one thing I regret. I wish I could **go / have gone** to university but of course, in those days, it just wasn't possible.
8 Excuse me, I wish **I spoke / to speak** to the person in charge.
9 I **wish / hope** it snows tomorrow!
10 Why on earth does Geoffrey wish **he would be given / they would give him** a knighthood?
11 Well, I don't think it's a very sensible business venture, but I do wish you **luck / lucky**.
12 My grandfather always wished that he **was / had been** taller.
13 If only **you were / you'd been** watching Thomas instead of checking your e-mail. He wouldn't have fallen off the slide then.
14 I do wish the taxi driver **didn't go / wasn't going** so slowly. We're never going to get there!
15 If only Peggy **wasn't / hadn't been** sent off. I'm sure we'd have won the match.

I Choose the correct answer.

1 Imagine ..... when the ancient Egyptians built the pyramids. How would your life have been different?
A you'd been living C you live
B you're living D you've been living

2 What if your cat suddenly ..... to you right now? How would you react?
A had started talking C starts talking
B is starting to talk D started talking

3 Would Rubik have become rich if he ..... the Rubik's Cube?
A hadn't invented C didn't invent
B hadn't been inventing D wasn't inventing

4 It's high time ..... rid of this old sofa.
A we got C for us to get
B we get D to get

5 It's amazing how Jenny acts as though she and Darren ..... serious problems at the moment.
A aren't having C hadn't had
B weren't having D hadn't been having

6 ..... either of you want some more dessert?
A Had C Did
B Would D Were

7 If you ..... to attend the wedding, would you still have to reply to the invitation?
A aren't planning C weren't planning
B don't plan D hadn't been planning

8 Apparently, Lewis would rather we ..... anything special for his 18th birthday next month.
A don't organise C haven't organised
B didn't organise D aren't going to organise

J 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 three and eight words, including the word given.

1 Pauline doesn't want to be given a main part in the school play. **rather**
Pauline ..... a main part in the school play.

2 We didn't get to meet the Minister and that was a great shame. **only**
If ..... to meet the Minister!

3 Why don't they stop making so much noise downstairs? **wish**
I ..... making so much noise downstairs!

4 What a shame I didn't see his face when you told him the news. **could**
I wish ..... his face when you told him the news.

5 Don't you think they should bring out a new version of *MatchPlayer*? **about**
Don't you think it's ..... out a new version of *MatchPlayer*?

6 I only knew about the meeting because Cynthia rang me. **if**
I wouldn't have known about the meeting .....

LIVEWORKSHEETS