



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 <u>went</u> on a diet 	! You could also use <u>It's high time/ It's about time</u> to make the meaning more emphatic - It's past midnight. It's time <u>you went</u> to bed. - It's about time <u>the government reduced</u> taxes.
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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.

CASE 2 - I'D RATHER YOU DID SOMETHING

I'd rather Mum <u>cooked</u> the meals 	! You should use <u>would rather + bare infinitive</u> when there is no change of the subject, e.g. <u>I'd rather not talk about this!</u> - The roads are icy. I'd <u>rather you did not drive</u> now. - Would you rather <u>we invited</u> our neighbors for dinner?
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- 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?

CASE 3 - I WISH / IF ONLY

I wish my teacher <u>were not</u> so strict. 	! With <u>wish</u>, you can use <u>I wish I were/ I wish he were</u> instead of <u>I wish I was/ I wish he was</u>. - I wish <u>I had</u> his mobile phone number. I'd call him. - I wish <u>he were not</u> such a boring person.
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- 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.

CASE 4 - UNREAL CONDITIONS - 2nd CONDITIONAL

If I lived in the Medieval Ages, I <u>would be</u> a knight. 	! Note that the main clause can contain <u>'would' 'could' or 'might'</u>. - If <u>I were</u> you, I <u>wouldn't</u> go out with that girl. - If <u>I had</u> free time, I <u>would</u> learn Spanish.
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- 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!