

# Expressing wishes and regrets

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL  
Intermediate

NUMBER  
EN\_BE\_3316X

LANGUAGE  
English





## Goals

- Can talk about my wishes for the future and for the present.
- Can express my regrets.







## Preview and warm-up

- In this lesson, we will look at ways to express **wishes** and **regrets**.



I **wish** you **would** listen to me.



## Wishes about the future – *wish*

- We can express **a wish** about the **future** using:
  - **wish + subject + would + bare infinitive.**
- When we are talking about ourselves, we use **could**, not **would**.



I **wish** it **would stop** raining soon. I have to walk to work.

I **wish** I **could afford** to buy an electric bike.





## Wishes about the future



- We can also use **wish** with a noun phrase.



I **wish** you **the best of luck** on your move to Berlin!



## Wishes about the future – *if only*

- We can also express a wish using:
  - **if only** + **subject** + **would** + **bare infinitive**.
- When we are talking about **ourselves**, we also use **could** instead of **would**.



**If only** Kayla **would realise** how talented she is.

I really want to pass my driving test. **If only** I **could**!





## Wishes about the future



- We use **hope** for something that is **realistic, possible** or **likely to happen** in the future and not **wish**:
- **hope + subject + verb.**



I **hope** you **enjoy** your holiday next week.  
I **hope** our train **leaves** on time.





## Match the sentence with the correct picture and complete it using *wish*, *if only* or *hope*

1. I / you / good luck / driving test

2. I / weather / improve

3. I / she / reply / email

4. I / somebody / answer / phone

5. Maddie / all the best / new job

6. I / post / arrive / before 11am

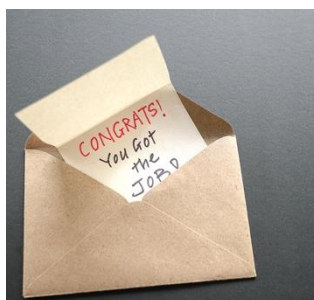
7. I / pleasant / stay

8. I / boyfriend / read more

A



C



E



G



B



D



F



H





## What do you wish for?

Using the sentences from the previous slide to help you, write down five wishes that you have for the future. Then share your wishes with the group.

- You can use the examples on the right to help you.
- Remember to use *wish*, *hope* or *if only* in your sentences!

...this event at the weekend goes well...

...my favourite character would return to that TV show...

...my neighbours would tell me when they are going to have a party...

...my cousin good luck in her exams...

...they would process my passport application more quickly...



## Wishes about the present – *wish*

- We can make **wishes** about the **present** using:
  - **wish + clause.**
- We also make **wishes** for **ourselves** in the **present** with:
  - **wish + subject + could + bare infinitive.**



I **wish** I **had** more money.

Kyle **wishes** he **could be** here, but he is very busy at the moment.





## Wishes about the present – *if only*

- We can also use **if only** + **clause** in the same way as **wish**.
- When we are talking about **ourselves**, we still use **could** + **bare infinitive** instead of **would**.



**If only** one of us **spoke** Italian, then we could ask for directions.

**If only** I **could stay** longer, but I really need to leave.





## Making wishes about the present

Use ***could*** + bare infinitive to make wishes about the present.  
Use the examples below, then think of three more of your own.

You wish for a new job in another city.

You want to start your own business.

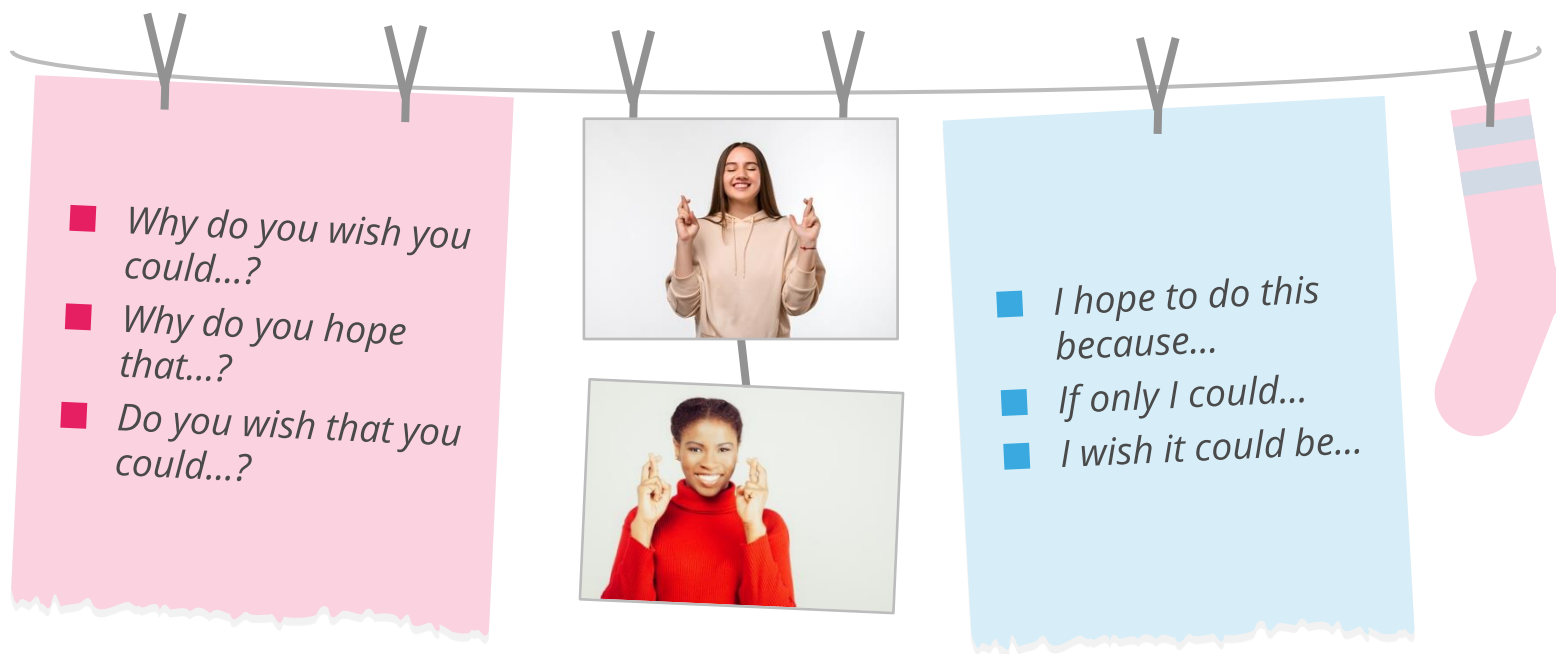
You want to be fluent in Japanese.

A notepad with a vertical line on the left and horizontal lines for writing. The notepad is white with a light blue vertical line on the left side. There are 10 horizontal lines for writing.



## Making wishes about the present

Take it in turns to read your three sentences aloud to the class.  
The other people in the class will then ask you questions about them.  
Your answers should include wishes about the present and future.





## Wishes about the past – *wish* and *if only*

- When we **make wishes about the past**, we use:
- **wish + subject + past perfect.**
- We can use **if only** instead of **wish**.



I **wish** I **had known** that the meeting was cancelled. I travelled all the way from London for it.

**If only** I **had studied** harder at university. I didn't get very good grades.





## Complete the sentences

Use the verbs in parentheses to complete the following regrets. Be careful to use the correct tense!

1. What I said was unkind. I wish I \_\_\_\_\_ it. **(not / say)**
2. You gave me some good tips. I wish I \_\_\_\_\_ your advice **(take)**
3. If only we \_\_\_\_\_ earlier. **(spoke)**
4. I wish I \_\_\_\_\_ you yesterday, but I need to leave early today. **(tell)**
5. If only we \_\_\_\_\_ for lunch on the way to the airport. We would have caught the flight! **(not / stop)**







## Regrets about the past – *could* + present perfect

- We use this structure when we **regret not being able to do something**:
  - **wish + could + have + past participle.**



Your presentation was very well-received. I **wish** I **could have been** there.

I **wish** I **could have performed** better.  
She deserved to win today.





## Using *could* + present perfect to express regret about the past

1. Your friends go to the cinema without you and they tell you how good the film was.



You say:  
I **wish** I **could have seen** it with you.

2. Your boss tells you that head office would like you to speak at the end of year meal tomorrow.



You tell your boss:  
I wish they \_\_\_\_\_ me a little more warning.

3. Your partner arrives home with takeaway pizza, but you have already started cooking dinner.



You say:  
I wish you \_\_\_\_\_. I've been cooking all afternoon!

4. Your friends take you out for a disappointing meal.



You tell your parents afterwards:  
I wish we \_\_\_\_\_. It wasn't a great restaurant.

5. You apply for a job but you are unsuccessful.



You tell your friend:  
If only \_\_\_\_\_ an interview.  
Then I could have impressed them in person.



## Regrets about the past – *should* + present perfect

- We use **should + have + past participle** to express **regret** about a **past action**.



It's my fault. I **should have checked** the door was locked before I left the house.

Nathan **shouldn't have painted** the walls that colour without asking you.





## Using *should* + present perfect

Look at the pictures below  
What *should* or *shouldn't* these people have done?





## *Regret + -ing form*

- We can also express **a regret** or **a wish about the past** using:
  - **regret + -ing form**



I **regret** quitting my job.



## Practise expressing regrets

1. I wish/buy/tickets



I wish I had bought tickets so I could join you!

2. If only/you/spend more time...



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. He should/speak more clearly...



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. If only/they make a bit more effort....



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. If only/I know...



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Writing an email

**Write an email to an old colleague of yours. You quit your job in the hope of finding a better one, but things did not turn out as you had hoped and now you are feeling very distressed. Explain your regrets to them as clearly as possible.**

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## Reflect on the goals

Go back to the second slide of the lesson and check if you have achieved all the goals of the lesson.

yes

no

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## Reflect on this lesson

Think about everything you have seen in this lesson.  
What were the most difficult activities or words? The easiest?



If you have time, go over  
the most difficult slides again



## Answer key 1/2

### Exercise p. 9 – other answers are possible

1. I wish you good luck for your driving test. (F)
2. I hope the weather improves. (D)
3. If only she would reply to my email. (E)
4. I wish somebody would answer the phone. (G)
5. Maddie wishes you all the best for your new job. (C)
6. I hope the post arrives before 11 am. (A)
7. I wish you a pleasant stay. (H)
8. I wish my boyfriend would read more (B)

### Exercise p. 13

- I wish I could find a new job in another city.
- I wish I could start my own business.
- I wish I could speak Japanese.

### Exercise p. 16

1. What I said was unkind. I wish I **hadn't said** it.
2. You gave me some good tips. I wish I **had taken** your advice.
3. If only we **had spoken** earlier.
4. I wish I **had told** you yesterday, but I need to leave early today.
5. If only we **hadn't stopped** for lunch on the way to the airport. We would have caught the flight!



## Answer key 2/2

### Exercise p. 18 – possible answers

2. I wish they **could have given** me a little more notice.
3. I wish you **could have told** me. I have been cooking all afternoon.
4. I wish we **could have eaten somewhere else**. It wasn't a great restaurant.
5. If only **they could have given me an** interview. Then I could have impressed them in person.

### Exercise p. 20 – possible answers

- She **shouldn't have left** the oven unattended.
- She **should have arrived** at the airport earlier.
- He **should have backed-up** his data.
- They **should have revised** for their exam.





## Categorise the sentences

I wish I expressed myself more clearly.

I wish my teacher wasn't so mean to me.

If only I bought a second ticket.

I wish I had planned that move a little more.

I wish I had taken more time with that essay.

If only I had trained harder.

I wish you understood how much I love you.

If only I bought more strawberries!

I wish I had understood how much you loved me.

I wish I had joined you at the canal.

If only I had called the police earlier.

I wish I had not stayed in that relationship.

regrets in the past

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regrets in the present

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## Express regret

**You made a mistake at work today. Time to let your manager know about it. Try to use some of the structures in the lesson to express your regrets and to inform them it won't happen again. Remember too that this is a work email. Keep the register formal.**

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□

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To: manager@lingodaclass.com

Subject: A note about today



## Homework answer key

### Exercise p. 29

#### Regrets in the past:

I wish I had planned that more a little more.  
I wish I had taken more time with that essay.  
If only I had trained harder.

I wish I had understood how much you loved me.  
I wish I had joined you at the canal.  
If only I had called the police earlier.  
I wish I had no stayed in that relationship.

#### Regrets in the present:

I wish I expressed myself more clearly.  
I wish my teacher wasn't so mean to me.  
If only I bought a second ticket.  
I wish you understood how much I love you.  
If only I bought more strawberries!



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