

STUDY REFERENCE

GRAMMAR

Wishing things were different

Language Summary

Wish

- You use wish to say that you would like things to be different from how they are. There are three different forms you can use with three different meanings.

Complaining: wish + past simple

- You use *wish* + *past simple* to complain about a present situation.

In the example below, the person is complaining about the gap in his front teeth.

*I **wish I didn't have** a big gap between my two front teeth.*

In the next example, the person is complaining about not having a full head of hair.

*I also **wish I still had** a full head of hair.*

Talking about annoying habits: wish + *would* + infinitive (without to)

- You use *wish* + *would* + infinitive (without to) to talk about an annoying habit that someone has now, or something that someone does now that annoys you or you don't like.

In the example below, the person is annoyed that people don't think about the environment.

*I **wish they'd stop** being so lazy and selfish and think about the environment.*

In the next example, the person is annoyed that the people don't leave him alone.

In both examples the person can't change the behavior now, so the situation is unreal.

*I **wish they'd leave** me alone. (wish they'd = wish they would)*

Expressing regret: wish + past perfect

- You use *wish* + *past perfect* to express your regret about something in the past.

In the first example, the person regrets not spending more time with his father.

*I **wish I'd made** more of an effort to spend time with my father in his last years.*

In the next example, the person regrets not reading in his 20s. (wish I'd = wish I had)

*I also **wish I'd discovered** the pleasure of reading when I was in my 20s instead of my 40s.*

In both examples, the person can't change what happened, so the situation is unreal.

