

Would I wish . . . would

A

We use **would** ('d) when we imagine a situation or action:

- It **would be** nice to buy a new car, but we can't afford it.
- I'm not going to invite them to the party. They **wouldn't** come anyway.

We use **would have done** when we imagine situations or actions in the past:

- They helped me a lot. I don't know what I **would have done** without their help.
- I **didn't** invite them to the party. They **wouldn't have come** anyway.

For **would** in sentences with **if**, see Units 35–37.

B

Compare **will** ('ll) and **would** ('d):

- I'll **stay** a little longer. I've got plenty of time.
- I'd **stay** a little longer, but I really have to go now. (so I can't stay longer)

Sometimes **would/wouldn't** is the past of **will/won't**. Compare:

- | <i>present</i> | → | <i>past</i> |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| ■ Tom: I'll call you on Sunday. | → | ■ Tom said he'd call me on Sunday. |
| ■ Ann: I promise I won't be late. | → | ■ Ann promised that she wouldn't be late. |
| ■ Liz: Darn! The car won't start. | → | ■ Liz was upset because the car wouldn't start. |

C

I wish . . . would . . .

I wish it would stop raining.



It is raining. Jill wants to go out, but not in the rain. She says:
I wish it would stop raining.

This means that Jill is complaining about the rain and wants it to stop.

We use **I wish . . . would . . .** when we want something to happen or when we want somebody to do something. The speaker is not happy with the present situation.

- The phone has been ringing for five minutes. I wish somebody would answer it.
- I wish you would do something instead of just sitting and doing nothing.

You can use **I wish . . . wouldn't . . .** to complain about things people do repeatedly:

- I wish you wouldn't keep interrupting me.

We use **I wish . . . would . . .** for actions and changes, *not* situations. Compare:

- I wish Sarah would come. (= I want her to come)

but I wish Sarah were here now. (*not* I wish Sarah would be)

- I wish somebody would buy me a car.

but I wish I had a car. (*not* I wish I would have)

For **I wish . . . were / had** (etc.), see Units 36B and 37C.

D

You can also use **would** when you talk about things that happened regularly in the past:

- When we were children, we lived by the ocean. In the summer, if the weather was nice, we would all get up early and go for a swim. (= we did this regularly)
- Whenever Arthur got angry, he would walk out of the room.

With this meaning, **would** is similar to **used to** (see Unit 17):

- Whenever Arthur was angry, he used to walk out of the room.

Exercises

38.1 Complete the sentences using *would* + one of the following verbs in the correct form:

be call ~~do~~ enjoy enjoy stop

1. They helped me a lot. I don't know what I would have done without their help.
2. You should go and see the movie. You _____ it.
3. It's too bad you couldn't come to the party last night. You _____ it.
4. I _____ you last night, but I didn't have your phone number.
5. Why don't you go and visit Maria? She _____ very happy to see you.
6. I was in a hurry when I saw you. Otherwise I _____ to talk.

38.2 What do you say in these situations? Write sentences with *I wish ... would ...*

1. It's raining. You want to go out, but not in the rain. You say:
I wish it would stop raining.
2. You're waiting for John to come. He's late and you're getting impatient. You say (to yourself): I wish _____.
3. You can hear a baby crying, and you're trying to study. You say:

4. You're looking for a job – so far without success. Nobody will give you a job. You say:
I wish somebody _____.
5. Brian has been wearing the same clothes for years. You think he needs some new clothes. You say (to Brian): _____.

For the following situations, write sentences with *I wish ... wouldn't ...*

6. Your friend drives very fast. You don't like it. You say (to your friend):
I wish you _____.
7. Jack always leaves the door open. This bothers you. You say (to Jack):
_____.
8. A lot of people drop their litter in the street. You don't like it. You say:
I wish people _____.

38.3 Are these sentences right or wrong? Correct the ones that are wrong.

1. I wish Sarah would be here now. I wish Sarah were here now.
2. I wish you would listen to me. _____
3. I wish I would have more money. _____
4. I wish it wouldn't be so cold today. _____
5. I wish the weather would change. _____
6. I wish you wouldn't complain all the time. _____
7. I wish everything wouldn't be so expensive. _____

38.4 These sentences are about things that often happened in the past. Complete the sentences using *would* + one of these verbs:

forget shake share walk

1. Whenever Arthur got angry, he would walk out of the room.
2. I used to live next to the railroad tracks. Whenever a train went by, the house _____.
3. You could never rely on Joe. It didn't matter how many times you reminded him to do something, he _____ always _____.
4. Brandi was always very generous. She didn't have much, but she _____ what she had with everyone else.