

Expressing regrets and criticisms

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_1032X_EN

LANGUAGE
English





Goals

- Can recognise and recall specific phrases to express wishes, regrets and criticisms.
- Can express wishes, regrets and criticisms tactfully in a wide range of situations.



When I was a child I **wished** I could eat ice cream every evening for dinner, but now I **wish** someone would cook me a meal every day like my mum did when I was young. I **wish** I had appreciated her more!



Tell your teacher

**Think about your
current job. Have you
ever wished that it
was different in some
way?**

different
location

shorter hours

different dress
code

more
interesting tasks



Tell your teacher

**Do you have any regrets related to your working life?
What about any regrets in general?**



I regret not working abroad when I was younger.

I wish I had...

I wish I hadn't...



Tact and criticism

Answer the questions below about tact and criticism.

In which situations is it OK to criticise someone?

What is the difference between tactful criticism and criticism that can hurt someone?

How do you react when someone criticises you?



Wish, regret or criticism?



If only I hadn't gone to the party last night.



I wish I were slimmer.



You're so annoying with that slingshot!



Wishes and regrets in the present

- We use the word **wish** when we have a **strong desire** for something, or we want to **change** something.
- Our wishes for the present are usually things which are unlikely or even impossible.
- We cannot use a present tense verb with **wish**.
- For wishes about present **states** we use **wish** + **past tense** of a normal verb.

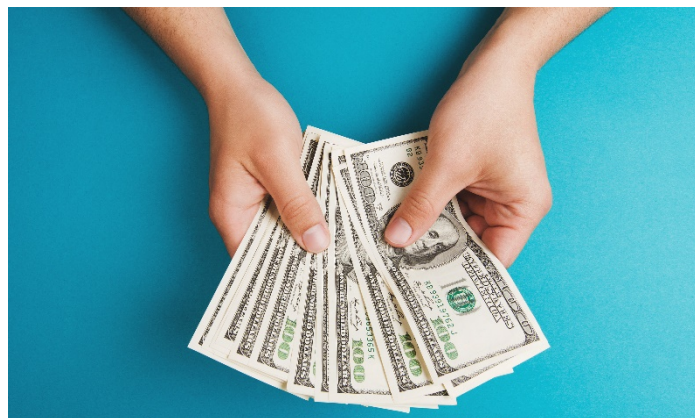
I am poor. I want to be rich.	I wish I were/was* rich.
I live in the UK. I want to live in Australia.	I wish I lived in Australia.
My girlfriend lives far away. I want her to live closer.	I wish my girlfriend lived closer.
I don't know what to do.	I wish I knew what to do.



Were or was?



- Did you notice that with the verb **to be**, the example shows **were/was**?
- It is correct to say **I wish I were** rich. If you want a way of remembering this, remember the conditional sentence **if I were you**.
- However, you will hear a lot of people saying **I wish I was** rich. This is informal (and technically not correct).



I **wish** I **were** rich.



Regrets in the past

- We use the word **wish** when we **regret** something we did or didn't do in the past.
- Our wishes for changing the past are **impossible**, as we have not yet perfected time travel!
- For wishes about the past we use **wish + past perfect** tense of a normal verb.

I didn't study hard at school.	I wish I had studied harder at school.
I moved to New Zealand instead of Australia.	I wish I had moved to Australia instead of New Zealand.
I went to bed too late last night.	I wish I hadn't gone to bed so late last night.
I ate too much chocolate yesterday.	I wish I hadn't eaten so much chocolate yesterday.



If only

- We can replace **wish** with **if only**. They mean the same thing, though **if only** is often thought to be stronger than **wish**.

If only I were rich, I wouldn't have these problems.

If only my boyfriend **lived** closer to me.

If only I hadn't moved to the UK, I might not have gotten divorced.

If only I had gone to bed earlier, I might have done better on my exam.





Transform the sentences using *wish* or *if only*

1. I want to be happy.

→ I wish I were happy.

2. I want to be an HR director.

→ _____

3. I want my boss to like me.

→ _____

4. I have too much work.

→ _____

5. I want to know what to do.

→ _____



Make sentences using *wish* or *if only*

1. I didn't go out last night.



I wish I had gone out last night.

2. I didn't buy that new dress I wanted.



3. My boyfriend didn't propose to me last year.



4. I didn't learn English when I was a child.



5. I didn't study hard so I failed my exam.





Wish + would

- We use **wish + would** for wishes about the future or about things that we hope will change as soon as possible:
 - E.g. *I wish that awful smell **would** go away.*
- We use this construction to express that we want to change something about someone or something else – not ourselves.
- It also usually expresses annoyance with the situation.

It has been raining all morning.	I wish it would stop raining.
He talks far too much.	I wish he would stop talking.
I hate that he smokes.	I wish he would stop smoking.
I don't like it when she talks to him.	I wish she wouldn't talk to him.



Wish + could

- We do not use wish + would when we want to change something about ourselves.
- Instead, we often use **wish + could** if it relates to an action.

I can't swim.	I wish I could swim.
I can't talk to her.	I wish I could talk to her.
I am a bad singer.	I wish I could sing better.
I am not allowed to play football.	I wish I could play football.



The past



- We do not use **wish + would** or **could** to talk about the past
- For the past we use **wish + past perfect**.



I **wish** my father **hadn't smoked** when I was a child.



Complete the sentences

Complete the sentences with *would* or *could* plus the appropriate verb.

1. My sister always borrows my clothes without asking. I wish...
2. My son hardly ever calls me. I wish...
3. I can't go out tonight because I have homework. I wish...
4. He always parks his car right outside my house. I wish...
5. I can't run very fast. I wish...



Look at the pictures

What do you think these people are wishing for?





Tact and criticism

- Giving and receiving **criticism** is part of life, but the way we **criticise** someone can vary a lot.
- When we criticise with **tact**, we **politely** give **meaningful** and **constructive** criticism without being **accusatory**.
- Criticising with **tact** means **helping the person** to do better, rather than simply putting them down.

bad criticism	→	tactful criticism
You've done everything wrong!		Not everything was quite correct.
Your idea is completely wrong.		I'm afraid I don't fully agree with this idea.
You need to change everything!		There are some things we can change.
Sort it out and do better next time.		If I were to do this I would...



Tactful criticism

- Look at the examples from the previous slide.
- In the final column you can see why the tactful criticism is better.

Bad criticism	Tactful criticism	Advice
You've done everything wrong!	Not everything was quite correct.	Avoid using the word you .
Your idea is completely wrong.	I'm afraid I don't fully agree with this idea.	Don't speak in absolute negatives.
You need to change everything!	There are some things we can change.	Avoid you and avoid extremes. Using we is helpful.
Sort it out and do better next time.	If I were to do this I would...	Try to give helpful solutions.



Phrases for tact

- There are also certain phrases you can use for **tact**.
- Sometimes giving a genuine **compliment** about something the person did or does well before the criticism can be tactful.

You did an excellent job, **but...**

I really appreciate all of your efforts on this, **but...**

That is a lovely jumper, **but...**

I'm very impressed by your work, **but...**





Which of these are tactful criticisms?



I really wish you wouldn't do that. It's so annoying.

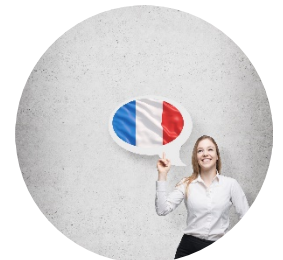
In general it was done well, but I think we can improve on it for next time.



I know you worked hard, but I don't quite see how it's going to be put into practice.



When you speak French, your accent is terrible!





Tactful criticism

How would you tactfully criticise someone in these situations?



1

You are a manager and your employee just gave a presentation. The statistics he presented didn't make sense.



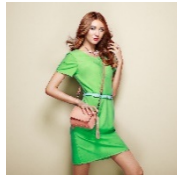
Tactful criticism

How would you tactfully criticise someone in these situations?



1

You are a manager and your employee just gave a presentation. The statistics he presented didn't make sense.



2

Your friend just bought a new dress but the colour doesn't suit her.



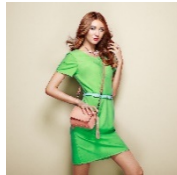
Tactful criticism

How would you tactfully criticise someone in these situations?



1

You are a manager and your employee just gave a presentation. The statistics he presented didn't make sense.



2

Your friend just bought a new dress but the colour doesn't suit her.



3

Your partner just cooked you dinner but it was disgusting.



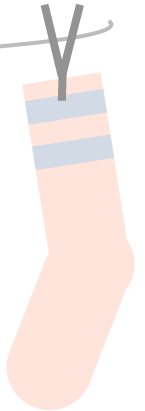
Discuss

Answer the questions below.

■ In which situations is it most important to be tactful?



■ Are there situations at work where you have to be tactful?





Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





Answer key

Exercise p. 7

regret, wish, criticism

Exercise p. 12

2. I wish I were an HR director. 3. I wish my boss liked me. 4. I wish I didn't have so much work. 5. I wish I knew what to do.

Exercise p. 13

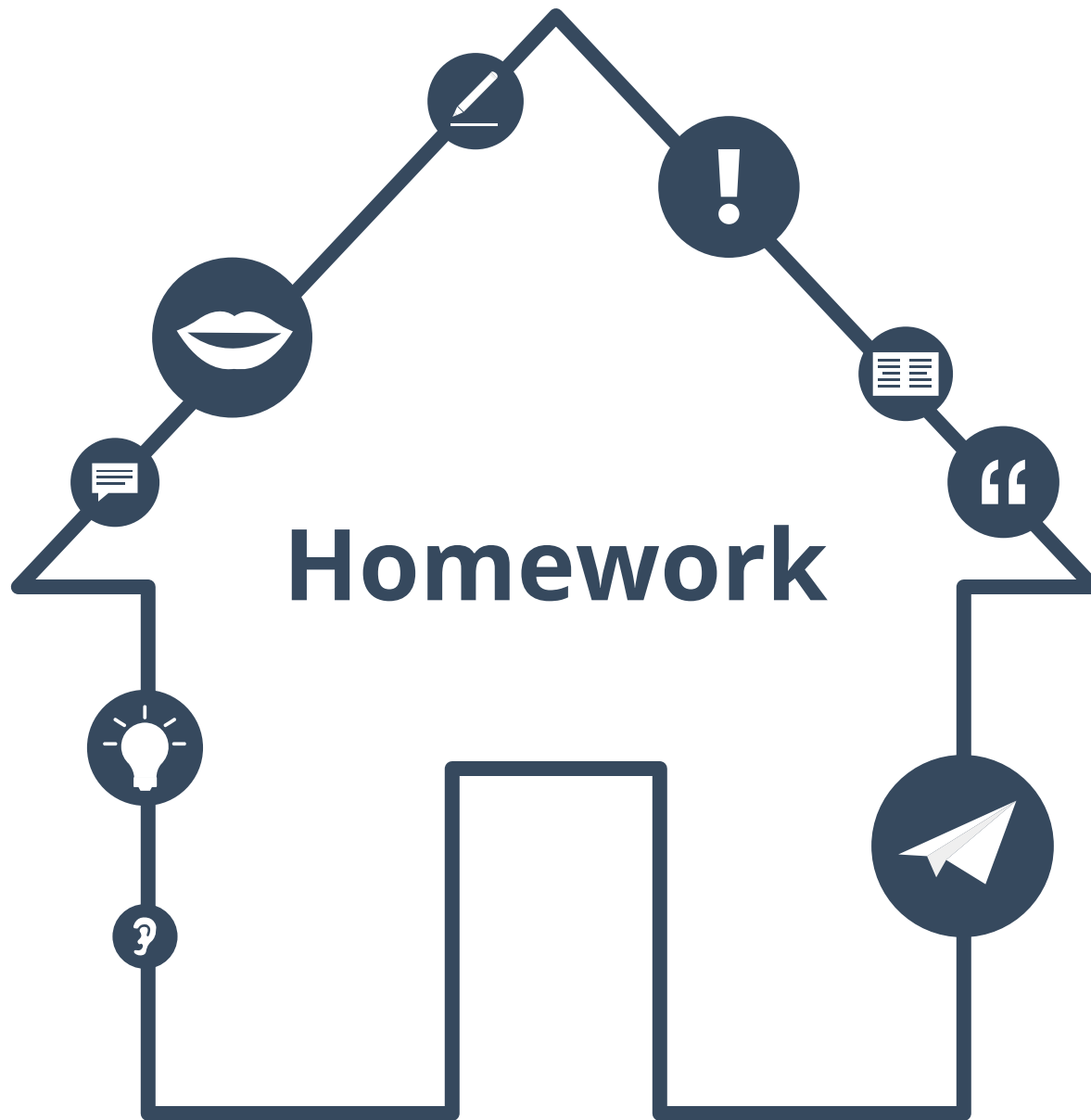
2. I wish I had bought that new dress I wanted. 3. I wish my boyfriend had proposed to me last year. 4. I wish I had learnt English when I was a child. 5. I wish I had studied harder and hadn't failed my exam.

Exercise p. 17

1. I wish she wouldn't borrow my clothes. 2. I wish he would call me more often. 3. I wish I could go out. 4. I wish he wouldn't park his car there. 5. I wish I could run faster.

Exercise p. 22

not tactful, tactful, tactful, not tactful





Transform the sentences into wishes or regrets

1. My dad always chews with his mouth open.



I wish my dad wouldn't chew with his mouth open.

2. I ate too many burgers yesterday.



3. I don't have enough money to buy a new car.



4. I shouldn't have told my friend that I hate her boyfriend.



5. My mum sings really loudly in the car.



6. I want to move to Spain.



7. I should have gone on holiday with my friends last year.



8. I can't swim.





Unscramble the tactful criticisms

A

can good do better.
but next It was time we

B

better you look look beautiful
but I think You always in red.



Homework answer key

Exercise p. 30

2. I wish I hadn't eaten so many burgers yesterday. 3. I wish I had enough money to buy a car. 4. I wish I hadn't told my friend that I hate her boyfriend. 5. I wish my mum wouldn't sing so loudly in the car. 6. I wish I could move to Spain. 7. I wish I had gone on holiday with my friends last year. 8. I wish I could swim.

Exercise p. 33

A. It was good but next time we can do better. B. You always look beautiful but I think you look better in red.



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