

# Unreal Past

## Practical Grammar

## **Wishes about the present**

Past form of the verb to talk about the present.

*I wish I knew his phone number.*

*I wish I was rich.*

## Wishes about the present

Difference between...

*I wish I **could** fly. I wish I **could** tell you.*

and

*I wish I **was** rich. I wish I **knew** the answer.*

## Wishes about the present

Difference between...

*I wish I **could** fly. I wish I **could** tell you.*

and

*I wish I **was** rich. I wish I **knew** the answer.*

Not in terms of meaning (both about something that is not the case). Both are past forms of source verbs *I can fly (>could)* , *I am rich (>was)*, etc.

## **Wishes about the past**

What's the form?

Imagine 'We took off too late.'

*I wish...*

# [PATTERNS: *WISH*]

## **Wishes about the past**

What's the form?

*I wish we'd taken off earlier.*

## **Wishes about the past**

What's the form?

*I wish I had known the answer yesterday.*

*I wish she had told me that earlier.*

## Hope

?

*I hope you enjoy / will enjoy the movie.*

## Hope

?

*I hope you enjoy / will enjoy the movie.*

Both are attested. Little difference.

Both refer to the future possibility.

Not the case that one is more distant future.

## Hope

?

*I hope you will enjoy / can enjoy the movie.*

## Hope

?

*I hope you will enjoy / can enjoy the movie.*

Again, little difference, but...

The variant with 'can' also focuses on ability.

Can be ironic: sounds like the speaker almost questions the listener's ability to enjoy.

## **Annoyance, disappointment: *Wish* + *would***

“Wishes with *would* are about general behaviour or habits, often bad ones which we wish would change.”

*I wish they would all just shut up.*

*I wish you'd quit interrupting me.*

*I wish you'd learn to knock on the door. Knock, knock, okay?*

## **Annoyance, disappointment: *Wish* + *would***

What's annoying in the following title of Phil Collins' song:

*I wish it would rain down.*

## **Annoyance, disappointment: *Wish* + *would***

What's annoying in the following title of Phil Collins' song:

*I wish it would rain down.*

Is the textbook rule wrong?

# [PATTERNS: *WISH*]

**Annoyance, disappointment: *Wish* + *would***

Fortunately not.

Phil Collins' title is a poetic play on:

*I wish it wouldn't rain (so much).*

# [PATTERNS: *WISH*]

**Annoyance, disappointment: *Wish + would***

Important point:

*Wish + would* is not merely a version of the *wish* construction with the past form of the verb *will*.

There really is an ‘annoyance’ factor in its use.

# [PATTERNS: *WISH*]

## **Annoyance, disappointment: *Wish* + *would***

*I wish they wouldn't air this show again.*

*I wish he wouldn't treat her that way.*

*I wish the guy in the band would ask me out!*

*I wish you wouldn't talk about her when you're around me.*

*I wish they would ask for my advice more often.*

# [WOULD RATHER, WOULD SOONER]

## Expressing choice

*...rather* + bare infinitive

*I'd rather **spend** eternity in hell than...*

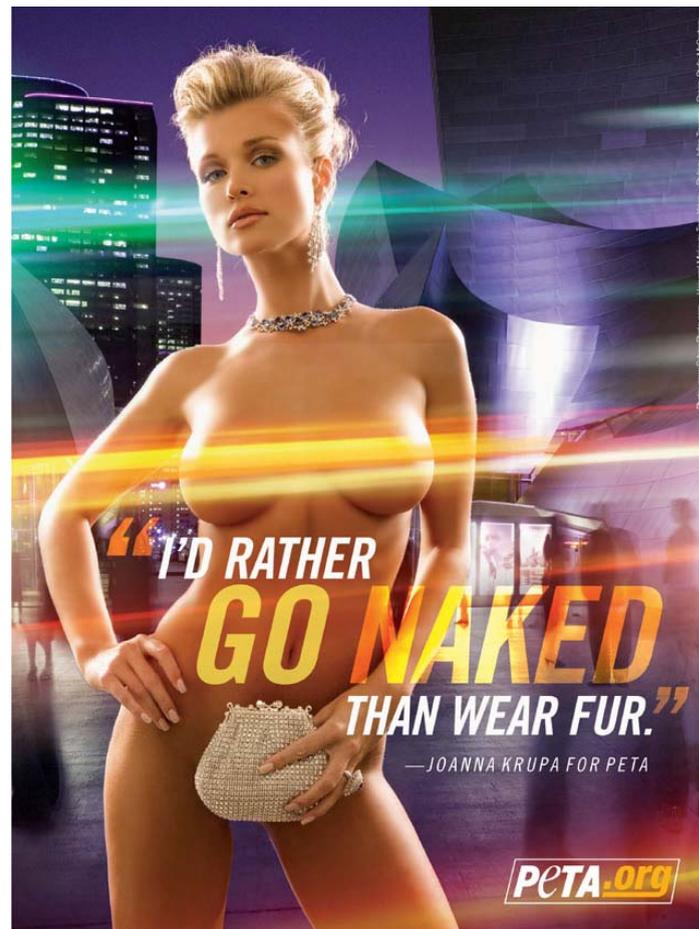
*I'd sooner **have** hot tea than hot beer.*

# [WOULD RATHER, WOULD SOONER]

Expressing choice

...*rather* + bare infinitive

**REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE!**



# [WOULD RATHER, WOULD SOONER]

## Expressing choice

***...rather* + NP + past form**

*I'd rather you ..... go around talking behind my back.*

*I'd sooner she ..... her mouth shut.*

# [WOULD RATHER, WOULD SOONER]

## Expressing choice

***...rather* + NP + past form**

*I'd rather you **..didn't...** go around talking behind my back.*

*I'd sooner she ..... her mouth shut.*

# [WOULD RATHER, WOULD SOONER]

## Expressing choice

*...rather* + NP + past form

*I'd rather you **..didn't...** go around talking behind my back.*

*I'd sooner she **...kept...** her mouth shut.*

# [WOULD PREFER]

## Expressing choice

*...would prefer + to- infinitive*

*I'd prefer to stay at home* (without mentioning alternate actions)

*I'd prefer to stay at home ..... waste time at the mall.*

# [WOULD PREFER]

## Expressing choice

*...would prefer + to- infinitive*

*I'd prefer to stay at home* (without mentioning alternate actions)

*I'd prefer to stay at home **rather than** waste time at the mall.*

# [WOULD PREFER]

## Expressing choice

*...would prefer + NP + ...*

*I'd prefer that you didn't mention this to anyone.*

*I'd prefer it if you didn't mention this to anyone.*

*I'd prefer you not to mention this to anyone.*

# [IT'S TIME]

**Expressing emergency, pressing need.**

***It's time* NP + ..... ?**

**Expressing emergency, pressing need.**

***It's time* NP + past tense**

*It's time Bill grew up.*

*It's time they got a taste of their own medicine.*

# [AS IF, AS THOUGH]

## Real vs. unreal

*She looks as if she knows the answer.*

*She looks as if she knew the answer.*

*It seems as though we really .....get a raise.*

# [AS IF, AS THOUGH]

## Real vs. unreal

*She looks as if she knows the answer.*

*She looks as if she knew the answer.*

*It seems as though we really **are going to** get a raise.*

# [AS IF, AS THOUGH]

## Similar contrast:

*He talks like an expert.*

*He talks as an expert.*

# [AS IF, AS THOUGH]

## **Similar contrast:**

*He talks like an expert. (=but he's not one.)*

*He talks as an expert. (=he really is an expert.)*

# Exercises

## Unreal Past

# [EXERCISES]

## Fill in the blanks.

*It's time that politicians ..... listening to the people.*

*Don't treat me as if I ..... retarded.*

*Do you ever wish people .....act more politely?*

*This computer is a mess. I wish I .....bought it.*

*Most parents would rather their kids ..... to college.*

*I wish they ..... play dumb music on the radio.*

*Jane acts as though she .....my boss.*

*I'd sooner .....glass than talk to her.*

# [EXERCISES]

## Fill in the blanks.

*It's time that politicians .....**started**..... listening to the people.*

*Don't treat me as if I ..... retarded.*

*Do you ever wish people .....act more politely?*

*This computer is a mess. I wish I .....bought it.*

*Most parents would rather their kids ..... to college.*

*I wish they ..... play dumb music on the radio.*

*Jane acts as though she .....my boss.*

*I'd sooner .....glass than talk to her.*

# [EXERCISES]

## Fill in the blanks.

*It's time that politicians ...**started**... listening to the people.*

*Don't treat me as if I ...**were**... retarded.*

*Do you ever wish people .....act more politely?*

*This computer is a mess. I wish I .....bought it.*

*Most parents would rather their kids ..... to college.*

*I wish they ..... play dumb music on the radio.*

*Jane acts as though she .....my boss.*

*I'd sooner .....glass than talk to her.*

# [EXERCISES]

## Fill in the blanks.

*It's time that politicians ...**started**... listening to the people.*

*Don't treat me as if I ...**were**... retarded.*

*Do you ever wish people ...**would**...act more politely?*

*This computer is a mess. I wish I .....bought it.*

*Most parents would rather their kids ..... to college.*

*I wish they ..... play dumb music on the radio.*

*Jane acts as though she .....my boss.*

*I'd sooner .....glass than talk to her.*

# [EXERCISES]

## Fill in the blanks.

*It's time that politicians ...**started**... listening to the people.*

*Don't treat me as if I ...**were**... retarded.*

*Do you ever wish people ...**would**...act more politely?*

*This computer is a mess. I wish I ...**hadn't**...bought it.*

*Most parents would rather their kids ..... to college.*

*I wish they ..... play dumb music on the radio.*

*Jane acts as though she .....my boss.*

*I'd sooner .....glass than talk to her.*

# [EXERCISES]

## Fill in the blanks.

*It's time that politicians ...**started**... listening to the people.*

*Don't treat me as if I ...**were**... retarded.*

*Do you ever wish people ...**would**...act more politely?*

*This computer is a mess. I wish I ...**hadn't**...bought it.*

*Most parents would rather their kids ...**went**... to college.*

*I wish they ..... play dumb music on the radio.*

*Jane acts as though she .....my boss.*

*I'd sooner .....glass than talk to her.*

# [EXERCISES]

## Fill in the blanks.

*It's time that politicians ...**started**... listening to the people.*

*Don't treat me as if I ...**were**... retarded.*

*Do you ever wish people ...**would**...act more politely?*

*This computer is a mess. I wish I ..**hadn't**...bought it.*

*Most parents would rather their kids ...**went**... to college.*

*I wish they ..**wouldn't**.. play dumb music on the radio.*

*Jane acts as though she .....my boss.*

*I'd sooner .....glass than talk to her.*

# [EXERCISES]

## Fill in the blanks.

*It's time that politicians ...**started**... listening to the people.*

*Don't treat me as if I ...**were**... retarded.*

*Do you ever wish people ...**would**...act more politely?*

*This computer is a mess. I wish I ..**hadn't**...bought it.*

*Most parents would rather their kids ...**went**... to college.*

*I wish they ..**wouldn't**.. play dumb music on the radio.*

*Jane acts as though she ...**were**....my boss.*

*I'd sooner .....glass than talk to her.*

# [EXERCISES]

## Fill in the blanks.

*It's time that politicians ...**started**... listening to the people.*

*Don't treat me as if I ...**were**... retarded.*

*Do you ever wish people ...**would**...act more politely?*

*This computer is a mess. I wish I ..**hadn't**...bought it.*

*Most parents would rather their kids ...**went**... to college.*

*I wish they ..**wouldn't**.. play dumb music on the radio.*

*Jane acts as though she ...**were**....my boss.*

*I'd sooner .....**eat**.....glass than talk to her.*

# [EXAMPLES]

## Design your own examples with:

*It's time ...*

*...as if / as though... (real / unreal)*

*I wish + would / wouldn't...*

*I wish + had / hadn't...*

*...would rather / sooner...*