



UNREAL USES OF THE PAST TENSES

**UNIT 11 OF THE RECOMMENDED GRAMMAR
BOOK**

WISH...

- **Use WISH + past simple to talk about things we would like to be different in the present/future**

It's a difficult problem. I wish I knew the answer to it!

- **Use WISH + past perfect to talk about things which happened/didn't happen in the past and which we now regret.**

I wish I hadn't spoken to Jane like that – you know how sensitive she is.



IF ONLY...

- We sometimes use *If only*... instead of wish with the past simple and past perfect. This can be used by itself (*If only I knew!*) or with another clause.
- **If only** is more emphatic than wish.
- When we want to talk about things we want to happen or stop happening because they annoy us, we use **wish or if only + person/thing + would + infinitive**, eg. *I wish the bus would come! If only he wouldn't keep whistling when I'm working!*



WOULD RATHER...

- We use **would rather + subject + past tense** to express a preference:

I'd rather you left your dog outside – I'm allergic to animals.

- We can also use **would rather + infinitive without to** when there is no change of subject:

*I'd rather **not talk** about it.*

- However, we cannot use this structure when the subject changes after would rather:

*I'd rather **you didn't talk** about it.*



IT'S TIME...

- We use the **past simple** after **It's time + subject** to say that something has to be done now or in the near future.
- We can also say **It's time + to + infinitive** when we don't want to specify the subject:

It's time to go now.

- We sometimes use **high** before time for emphasis:

It's high time the government did something about unemployment.

