



Wish & If Only:

Past Regrets: Wish in the Past / If Only + Past Perfect

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

- I failed the exam. I wish I ____ harder.
a) studied
b) had studied
c) would study
d) have studied
- She said something rude to her friend. She wishes she ____ that.
a) didn't say
b) wouldn't say
c) hasn't said
d) hadn't said
- If only I ____ to the doctor sooner. Now my condition is worse.
a) went
b) would go
c) had gone
d) have gone
- We missed the train. I wish we ____ earlier.
a) had left
b) left
c) would leave
d) have left
- He spent all his money on clothes. He wishes he ____ so much.
a) didn't spend
b) wouldn't spend
c) hadn't spent
d) hasn't spent
- I didn't bring an umbrella and got soaked. If only I ____ an umbrella.
a) had brought
b) would bring
c) have brought
d) brought
- They didn't invite Sarah to the party. They wish they ____ her.
a) invited
b) had invited
c) would invite
d) have invited
- I told my boss exactly what I thought. I wish I ____ my temper.
a) hadn't lost
b) didn't lose
c) wouldn't lose
d) haven't lost
- We didn't take any photos on holiday. I wish we ____ more photos.
a) had taken
b) would take
c) have taken
d) took
- If only she ____ that job offer. She really regrets turning it down.
a) accepted
b) would accept
c) had accepted
d) has accepted
- He ate too much cake and felt sick. He wishes he ____ so much.
a) didn't eat
b) hadn't eaten
c) wouldn't eat
d) hasn't eaten

12. I didn't learn to drive when I was younger. I wish I ____ to drive.
a) had learnt
b) learnt
c) would learn
d) have learnt
13. If only we ____ that house when it was cheap. Now it costs twice as much.
a) bought
b) had bought
c) would buy
d) have bought
14. She lied to her parents. She wishes she ____ them the truth.
a) told
b) would tell
c) has told
d) had told
15. I wasted my whole weekend playing video games. I wish I ____ my time.
a) didn't waste
b) wouldn't waste
c) hadn't wasted
d) haven't wasted
16. He forgot his wife's birthday. If only he ____.
a) didn't forget
b) wouldn't forget
c) hasn't forgotten
d) hadn't forgotten
17. We didn't book the restaurant in advance and couldn't get a table. I wish we ____.
a) booked
b) had booked
c) would book
d) have booked
18. If only I ____ that email before sending it. There were so many mistakes!
a) checked
b) would check
c) have checked
d) had checked
19. She didn't listen to her teacher's advice. She wishes she ____ more attention in class.
a) paid
b) would pay
c) had paid
d) has paid
20. They moved abroad without learning the language first. They wish they ____ the language before moving.
a) would learn
b) learnt
c) have learnt
d) had learnt



Answers

1. b) had studied
2. d) hadn't said
3. c) had gone
4. a) had left
5. c) hadn't spent
6. a) had brought
7. b) had invited
8. a) hadn't lost
9. a) had taken
10. c) had accepted
11. b) hadn't eaten
12. a) had learnt
13. b) had bought
14. d) had told
15. c) hadn't wasted
16. d) hadn't forgotten
17. b) had booked
18. d) had checked
19. c) had paid
20. d) had learnt



Explanations

1. “had studied” (b)

Use 'wish + past perfect' (had + past participle) for past regrets. 'I wish I had studied harder' means I didn't study enough and now I regret it. Past simple ('studied') would make this a present wish, not a past regret.

2. “hadn't said” (d)

Negative past regret: 'wish + hadn't + past participle'. She said something rude and now regrets it. 'She wishes she hadn't said that' means she wants to undo what she said. Use 'hadn't', not 'didn't'.

3. “had gone” (c)

'If only + past perfect' for past regrets, just like wish. 'If only I had gone to the doctor sooner' means I went too late and now regret it. 'If only' adds more emotion than 'wish'.

4. “had left” (a)

Past regret with wish + past perfect: 'I wish we had left earlier'. We didn't leave early enough and missed the train. The past perfect shows this is about a completed past event we regret.

5. “hadn't spent” (c)

Negative past regret: 'wish + hadn't + past participle'. He spent too much and now regrets it. 'Spend' is irregular: spend → spent → spent. Use 'hadn't spent', not 'didn't spend'.

6. “had brought” (a)

'If only + past perfect' to express a past regret. 'If only I had brought an umbrella' means I didn't bring one and now I'm wet. 'Bring' is irregular: bring → brought → brought.

7. “had invited” (b)

Past regret: 'wish + had + past participle'. They didn't invite Sarah and now feel bad about it. 'They wish they had invited her' expresses regret about a past action they failed to take.

8. “hadn't lost” (a)

Negative past regret: 'wish + hadn't + past participle'. The speaker lost their temper and now regrets it. 'Lose' is irregular: lose → lost → lost.

9. “had taken” (a)

Past regret: 'wish + had + past participle'. 'I wish we had taken more photos' means we didn't take photos and now regret it. 'Take' is irregular: take → took → taken.

10. “had accepted” (c)

'If only + past perfect' for past regrets. She didn't accept the job and now regrets it. 'If only she had accepted' is more emotional than 'She wishes she had accepted'.

11. “hadn't eaten” (b)

Negative past regret: 'wish + hadn't + past participle'. He ate too much and felt sick — now he regrets it. 'Eat' is irregular: eat → ate → eaten.

12. “had learnt” (a)

Past regret: 'wish + had + past participle'. The speaker didn't learn to drive and now regrets it. Both 'had learnt' and 'had learned' are correct — 'learnt' is more common in British English.

13. “had bought” (b)

'If only + past perfect' for a past regret about a missed opportunity. 'If only we had bought that house' — we didn't buy it when it was affordable and now regret it. 'Buy' is irregular: buy → bought → bought.

14. “had told” (d)

Past regret: 'wish + had + past participle'. She lied and now wishes she had been honest instead. 'Tell' is irregular: tell → told → told.

15. “hadn't wasted” (c)

Negative past regret: 'wish + hadn't + past participle'. The weekend is over and the speaker regrets wasting it. The past perfect shows this is a completed past event.

16. “hadn't forgotten” (d)

'If only + hadn't + past participle' for a negative past regret. He forgot and now deeply regrets it. 'Forget' is irregular: forget → forgot → forgotten.

17. “had booked” (b)

Past regret: 'wish + had + past participle'. We didn't book and now regret it. When the context is clear, you can leave out the rest: 'I wish we had booked' (= had booked in advance).

18. “had checked” (d)

'If only + past perfect' for a past regret. The email was already sent with mistakes — the speaker wishes they had reviewed it first. This is a common real-life regret scenario.

19. “had paid” (c)

Past regret: 'wish + had + past participle'. 'Pay attention' is a fixed expression. She didn't pay attention and now regrets it. 'Pay' is irregular: pay → paid → paid.

20. “had learnt” (d)

Past regret: 'wish + had + past participle'. They didn't learn the language before moving and now find life difficult. The past perfect emphasises that the learning should have happened before the move.