

# UNIT 38

## If and wish sentences (past)

a) Study this example situation:

Last month Ann was ill. Tom didn't know this, so he didn't go to see her. They met again after Ann got better. Tom said:

**If I had known** that you were ill, **I would have gone** to see you.

The real situation was that Tom didn't know that Ann was ill. So he says **If I had known ...** When you are talking about the past, you use the *past perfect* (**I had done / I had been / I had known** etc.) after **if**.

- **If I had seen** you when you passed me in the street, I would have said hello. (but I didn't see you)
- I would have gone out **if I hadn't been** so tired. (but I was too tired)
- **If he had been looking** where he was going, he wouldn't have walked into the wall. (but he wasn't looking)

Do not use **would (have)** in the **if** part of the sentence:

- **If I had seen you**, I would have said hello. (*not* 'if I would have seen')

Both **would** and **had** can be shortened to 'd:

- If I'd seen (= **had seen**) you, I'd have said (= **would have said**) hello.

b) You also have to use the *past perfect* (**I had done**) after **wish** when you say that you regret something that happened or didn't happen in the past:

- **I wish I had known** that Ann was ill. I would have gone to see her. (I didn't know that she was ill.)
- I feel sick. **I wish I hadn't eaten** so much. (I ate too much.)
- **Do you wish you had studied** science instead of languages? (You didn't study science.)
- The weather was awful. **I wish it had been** warmer. (It wasn't warm.)

You cannot use **would have** after **wish**:

- I wish it **had been** warmer. (*not* 'would have been')

c) **Would have (done)** is the past form of **would (do)**:

- If I had gone to the party last night, I **would be** tired now. (I am not tired now - *present*.)
- If I had gone to the party last night, I **would have seen** Ann. (I didn't see Ann - *past*.)

**Might have** and **could have** are possible instead of **would have**:

- If we'd played better, we **might have won**. (= perhaps we would have won)
- We **could have gone** out if the weather hadn't been so bad. (= we would have been able to go out)

For **if** sentences and **wish** see also Units 36, 37 and 39.

# UNIT 38 Exercises

---

**38.1** In this exercise you have to put the verb into the correct form.

Examples: If I ..... had known ..... (know) that you were ill last week, I'd have gone to see you.  
Tom ..... wouldn't have entered ..... (not/enter) for the examination if he had known that it would be so difficult.

- 1 Tom got to the station in time. If he ..... (miss) the train, he would have been late for his interview.
  - 2 It's good that Ann reminded me about Tom's birthday. I ..... (forget) if she hadn't reminded me.
  - 3 We might not have stayed at this hotel if George ..... (not/recommend) it to us.
  - 4 I'd have sent you a postcard while I was on holiday if I ..... (have) your address.
- 

**38.2** Now you have to read a situation and write a sentence with if.

Example: She didn't eat anything because she wasn't hungry.  
If she had been hungry, she would have eaten something.

- 1 The accident happened because the driver in front stopped so suddenly.  
If the driver in front .....
  - 2 I didn't wake George because I didn't know he wanted to get up early.  
If I .....
  - 3 I was able to buy the car because Jim lent me the money.  
If .....
  - 4 She wasn't injured in the crash because she was wearing a seat-belt.  
If .....
  - 5 You're hungry now because you didn't have breakfast.  
If .....
  - 6 She didn't buy the coat because she didn't have enough money on her.  
If .....
- 

**38.3** This time you have to imagine that you are in a situation. For each situation, make a sentence with I wish ...

Example: You've eaten too much and now you feel sick.  
You say: I wish I hadn't eaten so much.

- 1 You've just painted the door red. Now you decide that it doesn't look very nice.  
You say: I wish I .....
- 2 You are walking in the country. You would like to take some photographs but you didn't bring your camera. You say: I .....
- 3 A good friend of yours visited your town but unfortunately you were away when he came. So you didn't see him. You say: .....
- 4 You've just come back from your holiday. Everything was fine except for the hotel, which wasn't very good. You say: .....