


# UNIT 39 Would

For **would** and **would have** in *if* sentences (*conditional*), see Units 36, 37 and 38.  
 For **would** in offers, invitations etc., see Unit 31. This unit explains some other uses of **would**.

a) Sometimes we use **would** after **I wish ...**. Study this example:



It is raining. Tom wants to go out, but not in the rain. He says:  
**I wish it would stop raining.**

This means that Tom is complaining about the rain and wants it to stop. We use **I wish ... would ...** when we want something to happen or somebody to do something. The speaker is complaining about the present situation.

- I **wish** someone **would** answer that telephone. It's been ringing for about five minutes.
- The music next door is very loud. I **wish** they **would** turn it down.

We often use **I wish ... wouldn't** to complain about the way people do things:

- I **wish** you **wouldn't** drive so fast. It makes me nervous.

We use **I wish ... would** when we want something to change or somebody else to do something. So you cannot say 'I wish I would ...'.

For more information about **wish**, see Units 37 and 38.

b) **Would/wouldn't** is sometimes the past of **will/won't**:

*present* Tom: I'll lend you some money, Ann.

*past* Tom said that he **would** lend Ann some money.

*present* Ann: I promise I **won't** be late.

*past* Ann promised that she **wouldn't** be late.

*present* Tom: Damn! The car **won't** start.

*past* Tom was angry because the car **wouldn't** start.

c) You can also use **would** when you look back on the past and remember things that often happened:

- When we were children, we lived by the sea. In summer, if the weather was fine, we **would** all get up early and go for a swim.
- Whenever Arthur was angry, he **would** just walk out of the room.

**Used to** is also possible in these sentences:

- ... we all **used to** get up early and go ...

See Unit 25 for **used to**.

# UNIT 39 Exercises

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**39.1** *In this exercise you have to read a situation and then write a sentence with I wish ... would ...*

*Example:* It's raining. You want to go out, but not in the rain. So you want it to stop raining. What do you say? I wish it would stop raining.

- 1 You're waiting for Tom. He's late and you're getting impatient. You want him to come. What do you say? I wish .....
  - 2 A baby is crying and you're trying to sleep. You want the baby to stop crying. What do you say? I .....
  - 3 You're looking for a job – so far without success. You want somebody to give you a job. What do you say? I wish somebody .....
  - 4 Brian has been wearing the same old clothes for years. You think he needs some new clothes and you want him to buy some. What do you say to him? .....
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**39.2** *Now you have to use I wish ... wouldn't ...*

*Example:* Tom drives very fast. You don't like this. What do you say to him?  
I wish you wouldn't drive so fast.

- 1 You are telling your friend about the man in the next flat. He often plays the piano in the middle of the night and you don't like this. What do you say to your friend?  
I .....
  - 2 A lot of people drop litter in the street. You don't like this. What do you say?  
I wish people .....
  - 3 Jack always leaves the door open. You don't like this. What do you say to him?  
I .....
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**39.3** *In this exercise you have to write a sentence with promised.*

*Example:* I wonder why she's late. She promised she wouldn't be late.

- 1 I wonder why Tom hasn't written to me. He promised .....
  - 2 I wonder why Ann told Tom what I said. She promised .....
  - 3 I wonder why they haven't come. They .....
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**39.4** *These sentences are about things that often happened in the past. You have to put in would with one of these verbs: be ~~walk~~ take shake*

*Example:* Whenever Arthur was angry, he would walk out of the room.

- 1 We used to live next to a railway line. Every time a train went past, the whole house .....
- 2 That cinema is nearly always empty now. I remember a few years ago it ..... crowded every night.
- 3 When he went out, Jack ..... always ..... an umbrella with him whether it was raining or not.