

Beginner

The Use of If I Knew and I Wish I knew

RULES AND EXAMPLES

1. Study this example situation:

Sarah wants to phone Paul, but she can't do this because she doesn't know his number. She says:

If I knew his number, **I would phone** him.

Sakichi says: **If I knew** his number ... This tells us that she *doesn't* know his number. She is imagining the situation. The *real* situation is that she doesn't

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4. **If you were** in my position, what would you do?
5. It's a pity you can't drive. It would be useful **if you could**.

2. We use the past in the same way after **wish** (**I wish I knew** / **I wish you were** etc.). We use **wish** to say that we regret something, that something is not as we would like it to be:

Examples:

1. **I wish I knew** Paul's phone number. (= I don't know it and I regret this)
2. Do you ever **wish** you **could** fly? (you can't fly)
3. It rains a lot here. I **wish** it **didn't** rain so often.
4. It's very crowded here. I **wish** there **weren't** so many people. (there are a lot of people)

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3. If I were / If I was

After **if** and **wish**, you can use **were** instead of **was** (if I were ... / I wish it were etc.). **I was** / **it was** are also possible. So you can say:

Examples:

- | | | |
|--|----|--------------------------------------|
| 1. If I were you, I wouldn't buy that coat. | Or | If I was you, ... |
| 2. I'd go out if it weren't so cold. | Or | ... if it wasn't so cold. |
| 3. I wish Carol were here. | Or | I wish Carol was here. |

4. We do not normally use **would** in the **if**-part of the sentence or after wish:

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You could get a better job	(you could get = you would be able to get)
if you could use a computer.	(you could use = you were able to use)