

# Expressing regrets and criticisms

SKILLS

LEVEL  
Advanced

NUMBER  
C1\_1032X\_EN

LANGUAGE  
English

lingoda

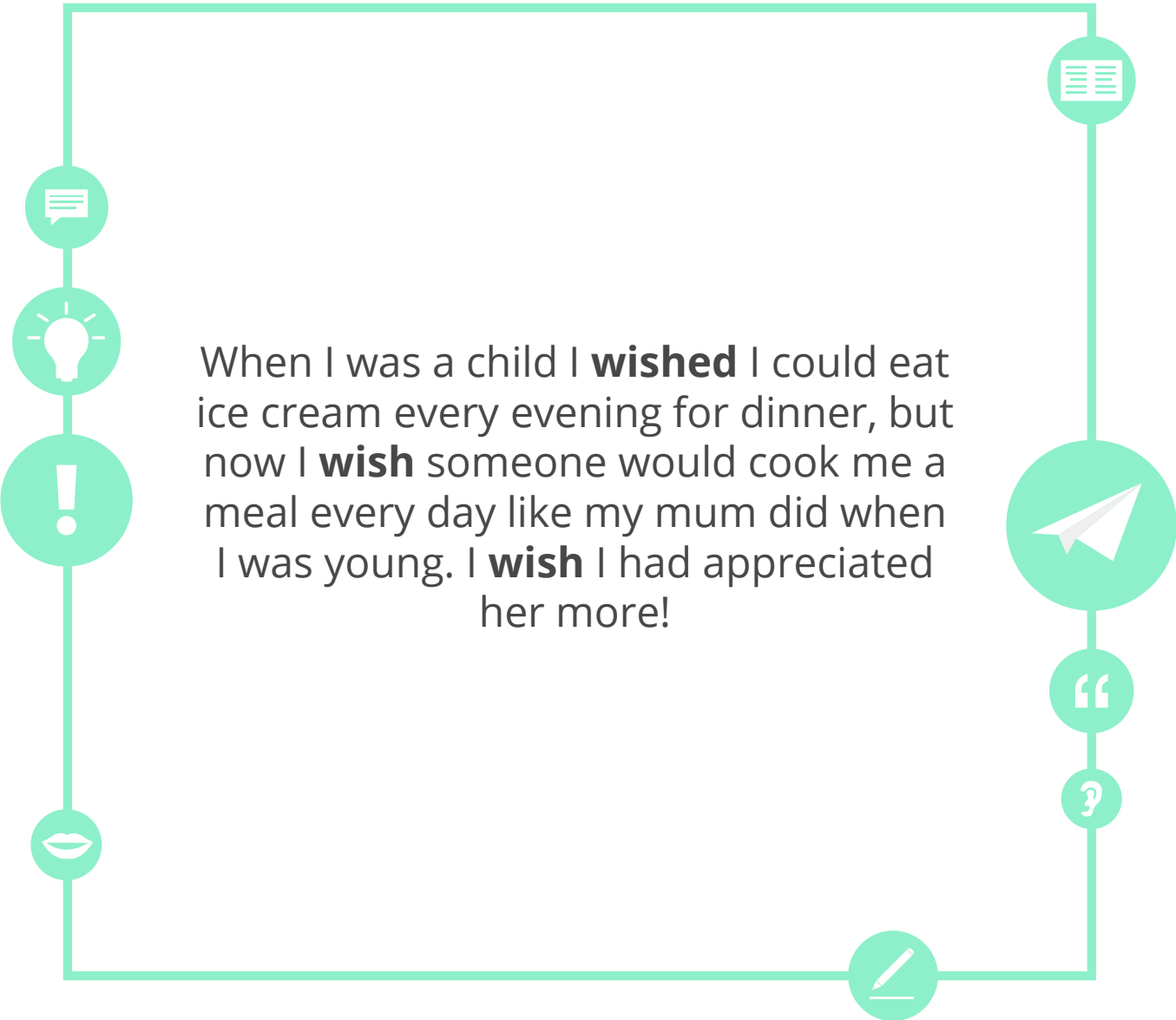




## Goals

- Learn how to express wishes, regrets and criticisms
- Practise expressing wishes, regrets and criticisms
- Learn about using tact and situations in which you should use it





When I was a child I **wished** I could eat ice cream every evening for dinner, but now I **wish** someone would cook me a meal every day like my mum did when I was young. I **wish** I had appreciated her more!



Tell your teacher

**Think about your current job. Have you ever wished that it was different in some way?**

different location

shorter hours

different dress code

more interesting tasks



## Tell your teacher

**Do you have any regrets related to your working life?  
What about any regrets in general?**



I regret not working abroad when I was younger.

I wish I had...

I wish I hadn't...



## Tact and criticism

**Answer the questions below about tact and criticism.**

In which situations is it OK to criticise someone?

What is the difference between tactful criticism and criticism that can hurt someone?

How do you react when someone criticises you?



## Wish, regret or criticism?



If only I hadn't gone to the party last night.



I wish I were slimmer.



You're so annoying with that slingshot!



## Wishes and regrets in the present

- We use the word **wish** when we have a **strong desire** for something, or we want to **change** something.
- Our wishes for the present are usually things which are unlikely or even impossible.
- We cannot use a present tense verb with **wish**.
- For wishes about present **states** we use **wish** + **past tense** of a normal verb.

I am poor. I want to be rich.	I <b>wish</b> I <b>were/was*</b> rich.
I live in the UK. I want to live in Australia.	I <b>wish</b> I <b>lived</b> in Australia.
My girlfriend lives far away. I want her to live closer.	I <b>wish</b> my girlfriend <b>lived</b> closer.
I don't know what to do.	I <b>wish</b> I <b>knew</b> what to do.





## Were or was?



- Did you notice that with the verb **to be**, the example shows **were/was**?
- It is correct to say **I wish I were** rich. If you want a way of remembering this, remember the conditional sentence **if I were you**.
- However, you will hear a lot of people saying **I wish I was** rich. This is informal (and technically not correct).



I **wish** I **were** rich.



## Regrets in the past

- We use the word **wish** when we **regret** something we did or didn't do in the past.
- Our wishes for changing the past are **impossible**, as we have not yet perfected time travel!
- For wishes about the past we use **wish** + **past perfect** tense of a normal verb.

I didn't study hard at school.	I <b>wish</b> I <b>had studied</b> harder at school.
I moved to New Zealand instead of Australia.	I <b>wish</b> I <b>had moved</b> to Australia instead of New Zealand.
I went to bed too late last night.	I <b>wish</b> I <b>hadn't gone</b> to bed so late last night.
I ate too much chocolate yesterday.	I <b>wish</b> I <b>hadn't eaten</b> so much chocolate yesterday.



## If only

- We can replace **wish** with **if only**. They mean the same thing, though **if only** is often thought to be stronger than **wish**.

**If only** I **were** rich, I wouldn't have these problems.

**If only** my boyfriend **lived** closer to me.

**If only** I **hadn't moved** to the UK, I might not have gotten divorced.

**If only** I **had gone** to bed earlier, I might have done better on my exam.





## Transform the sentences using *wish* or *if only*

1. I want to be happy.

→ I wish I were happy.

2. I want to be an HR director.

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. I want my boss to like me.

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. I have too much work.

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. I want to know what to do.

→ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Make sentences using *wish* or *if only*

1. I didn't go out last night.



I wish I had gone out last night.

2. I didn't buy that new dress I wanted.



---

---

3. My boyfriend didn't propose to me last year.



---

---

4. I didn't learn English when I was a child.



---

---

5. I didn't study hard so I failed my exam.



---

---



## ***Wish + would***

- We use **wish + would** for wishes about the future or about things that we hope will change as soon as possible:
  - E.g. *I wish that awful smell **would** go away.*
- We use this construction to express that we want to change something about someone or something else – not ourselves.
- It also usually expresses annoyance with the situation.

It has been raining all morning.	I <b>wish</b> it <b>would</b> stop raining.
He talks far too much.	I <b>wish</b> he <b>would</b> stop talking.
I hate that he smokes.	I <b>wish</b> he <b>would</b> stop smoking.
I don't like it when she talks to him.	I <b>wish</b> she <b>wouldn't</b> talk to him.



## ***Wish + could***

- We do not use wish + would when we want to change something about ourselves.
- Instead, we often use **wish + could** if it relates to an action.

I can't swim.	I <b>wish</b> I <b>could</b> swim.
I can't talk to her.	I <b>wish</b> I <b>could</b> talk to her.
I am a bad singer.	I <b>wish</b> I <b>could</b> sing better.
I am not allowed to play football.	I <b>wish</b> I <b>could</b> play football.



## The past



- We do not use **wish + would** or **could** to talk about the past
- For the past we use **wish + past perfect**.



I **wish** my father **hadn't smoked** when I was a child.





## Complete the sentences

**Complete the sentences with *would* or *could* plus the appropriate verb.**

1. My sister always borrows my clothes without asking. I wish...
2. My son hardly ever calls me. I wish...
3. I can't go out tonight because I have homework. I wish...
4. He always parks his car right outside my house. I wish...
5. I can't run very fast. I wish...



## Look at the pictures

What do you think these people are wishing for?





## Tact and criticism

- Giving and receiving **criticism** is part of life, but the way we **criticise** someone can vary a lot.
- When we criticise with **tact**, we **politely** give **meaningful** and **constructive** criticism without being **accusatory**.
- Criticising with **tact** means **helping the person** to do better, rather than simply putting them down.

bad criticism	→	tactful criticism
You've done everything wrong!		Not everything was quite correct.
Your idea is completely wrong.		I'm afraid I don't fully agree with this idea.
You need to change everything!		There are some things we can change.
Sort it out and do better next time.		If I were to do this I would...



## Tactful criticism

- Look at the examples from the previous slide.
- In the final column you can see why the tactful criticism is better.

Bad criticism	Tactful criticism	Advice
You've done everything wrong!	Not everything was quite correct.	Avoid using the word <b>you</b> .
Your idea is completely wrong.	I'm afraid I don't fully agree with this idea.	Don't speak in absolute negatives.
You need to change everything!	There are some things we can change.	Avoid <b>you</b> and avoid extremes. Using <b>we</b> is helpful.
Sort it out and do better next time.	If I were to do this I would...	Try to give helpful solutions.



## Phrases for tact

- There are also certain phrases you can use for **tact**.
- Sometimes giving a genuine **compliment** about something the person did or does well before the criticism can be tactful.

You did an excellent job, **but...**

I really appreciate all of your efforts on this, **but...**

That is a lovely jumper, **but...**

I'm very impressed by your work, **but...**





## Which of these are tactful criticisms?



I really wish you wouldn't do that. It's so annoying.

In general it was done well, but I think we can improve on it for next time.



I know you worked hard, but I don't quite see how it's going to be put into practice.



When you speak French, your accent is terrible!





## Tactful criticism

**How would you tactfully criticise someone in these situations?**



1

You are a manager and your employee just gave a presentation. The statistics he presented didn't make sense.



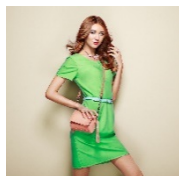
## Tactful criticism

**How would you tactfully criticise someone in these situations?**



1

You are a manager and your employee just gave a presentation. The statistics he presented didn't make sense.



2

Your friend just bought a new dress but the colour doesn't suit her.





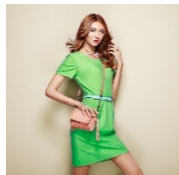
## Tactful criticism

**How would you tactfully criticise someone in these situations?**



1

You are a manager and your employee just gave a presentation. The statistics he presented didn't make sense.



2

Your friend just bought a new dress but the colour doesn't suit her.



3

Your partner just cooked you dinner but it was disgusting.



## Discuss

Answer the questions below.

■ In which situations is it most important to be tactful?



■ Are there situations at work where you have to be tactful?





## Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!





## Answer key

### Exercise p. 7

regret, wish, criticism

### Exercise p. 12

2. I wish I were an HR director. 3. I wish my boss liked me. 4. I wish I didn't have so much work. 5. I wish I knew what to do.

### Exercise p. 13

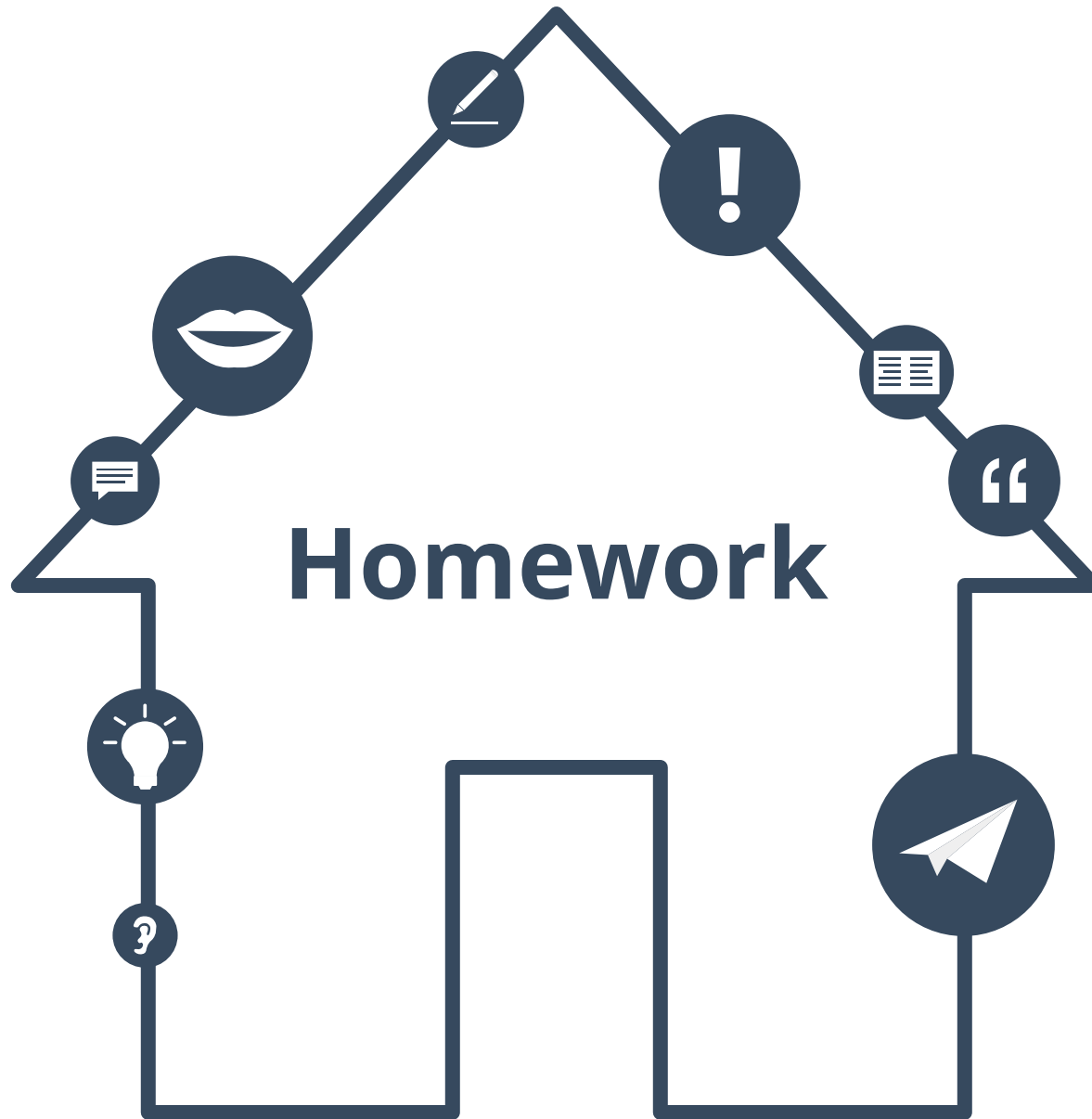
2. I wish I had bought that new dress I wanted. 3. I wish my boyfriend had proposed to me last year. 4. I wish I had learnt English when I was a child. 5. I wish I had studied harder and hadn't failed my exam.

### Exercise p. 17

1. I wish she wouldn't borrow my clothes. 2. I wish he would call me more often. 3. I wish I could go out. 4. I wish he wouldn't park his car there. 5. I wish I could run faster.

### Exercise p. 22

not tactful, tactful, tactful, not tactful





## Transform the sentences into wishes or regrets

1. My dad always chews with his mouth open.



I wish my dad wouldn't chew with his mouth open.

2. I ate too many burgers yesterday.



\_\_\_\_\_

3. I don't have enough money to buy a new car.



\_\_\_\_\_

4. I shouldn't have told my friend that I hate her boyfriend.



\_\_\_\_\_

5. My mum sings really loudly in the car.



\_\_\_\_\_

6. I want to move to Spain.



\_\_\_\_\_

7. I should have gone on holiday with my friends last year.



\_\_\_\_\_

8. I can't swim.



\_\_\_\_\_



## Unscramble the tactful criticisms

A



B





## Homework answer key

### Exercise p. 30

2. I wish I hadn't eaten so many burgers yesterday. 3. I wish I had enough money to buy a car. 4. I wish I hadn't told my friend that I hate her boyfriend. 5. I wish my mum wouldn't sing so loudly in the car. 6. I wish I could move to Spain. 7. I wish I had gone on holiday with my friends last year. 8. I wish I could swim.

### Exercise p. 33

A. It was good but next time we can do better. B. You always look beautiful but I think you look better in red.





## About this material

Find out more at  
[www.lingoda.com](http://www.lingoda.com)



This material is proudly provided by

**lingoda**

and can be used by anyone for free and  
for any purpose.

### **lingoda** Who are we?



Why learn English online?



What kinds of English classes do we offer?



Who are our English teachers?



How do our English certificates work?



We also have a language blog!