

Expressing wishes in English

The phrase I wish I had... is the most common structure used to talk about our wishes. Here are some common wishes people have.

I wish I had more money.

I wish I had more friends.

I wish I had a bigger house.

I wish I was taller.

I wish I was more beautiful.

I wish I had curly hair.

I wish I had blue eyes.

I wish I had a caring husband.

I wish I had a cute daughter.

I wish I had a better memory.

Note the use of past tense verbs in this structure.

In the phrase I wish I had... 'had' is the simple past form of the verb 'have'. Instead of had, you can use the simple past form of other verbs as well.

I wish I spoke French.

I wish I knew Italian.

I wish I looked smarter.

I wish I drove a Ferrari.

I wish I lived in Shanghai.

I wish I had a golden voice.

I wish I knew more people.

I wish I played the piano.

Although we use past tense forms in this structure, we are not referring to the past in these sentences. Instead, we are merely expressing our wishes in the present.

To talk about past wishes, we can use the structure I wish I had had... Note that the second had in this structure is the past participle form of have. Past participle forms of other verbs

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are also possible in this case.

I wish I had had more money.

I wish I had worked harder. (= I didn't work harder, but now I regret it.)

I wish I had had more time on my business trip last week.

I wish I hadn't trusted him.

I wish I had listened to his advice.