

## 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 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')