

## Past tenses Past or not

*Listen to your teacher read out sentences that use past tenses and lift up one of your two cards depending on whether the meaning is past or not.*

*Which of the underlined parts of the sentences below are about the past? (One sentence has two different times in it.)*

- I could speak Chinese quite well.
- Could you possibly...?
- I'm getting used to starting early in the morning to miss rush hour.
- I used to use a fax all the time
- He would always arrive late for meetings, even ones he had asked for.
- We would be very grateful if...
- If I were in your place, I'd take the offer from the headhunter.
- Supposing you had complete freedom, how would you change your company?
- If I 'd stayed just 15 minutes more, I 'd have got into a fight.
- If I 'd stayed just 15 minutes more, I 'd probably still have that job.
- I wish I didn't have so many meetings this week.
- I wish I hadn't accepted so many projects in August.
- If only I had more free time in the mornings.
- If only I had had more time to talk to him.
- Was there anything else?
- There was just one last thing I wanted to ask.
- I had one or two things that I wanted to add.
- I was wondering if...

*What are the two uses of past tenses above which are not about past time? Which sentences are examples of each of those two uses?*

*Change these sentences which aren't about the past into ones which are:*

- I'm getting used to starting early in the morning to miss rush hour.
- If I were in your place, I'd take the offer from the headhunter.
- Supposing you had complete freedom, how would you change your company?
- I wish I didn't have so many meetings.
- If only I had more free time in the mornings.

*Change these sentences about the past into ones that are about the present or future.*

- I could speak Chinese quite well.
- I used to use a fax all the time.
- He would always arrive late for meetings, even ones he had asked for.
- If I 'd stayed just 15 minutes more, I 'd have got into a fight.
- I wish I hadn't accepted so many projects.
- If only I had had more time to talk to him.

## Past tenses Past or not Answer key

### *Not past sentences and meanings*

- Could you possibly...? – Not past (politeness)
- I'm getting used to starting early in the morning to miss rush hour. – Not past
- We would be very grateful if... - Not past (politeness)
- If I were in your place, I'd take the offer from the headhunter. – Not past (imagination)
- Supposing you had complete freedom, how would you change your company? – Not past (imagination)
- If I'd stayed just 15 minutes more, I'd have got into a fight. – Both parts not past (imagination)
- If I'd stayed just 15 minutes more, I'd probably still have that job. – First part not past, second part past (imagination)
- I wish I didn't have so many meetings this week. – Not past (imagination)
- If only I had more free time in the mornings. – Not past (imagination)
- Was there anything else? – Not past (politeness)
- There was just one last thing I wanted to ask. – Not past (politeness)
- I had one or two things that I wanted to add. – Not past (politeness)
- I was wondering if... - Not past (politeness)

*What are the two uses of past tenses above which are not about past time? Politeness and unreal/ imaginary/ impossible.*

### *Change these sentences which aren't about the past into ones which are:*

- I'm getting used to starting early in the morning to miss rush hour – I was getting used to starting early in the morning
- If I were in your place, I'd take the offer from the headhunter. – If I had been in your place, I would have taken the offer from the headhunter
- Supposing you had complete freedom, how would you change your company? – Supposing you had had complete freedom, how would you have changed your company?
- I wish I didn't have so many meetings. – I wish I hadn't had so many meetings
- If only I had more free time in the mornings. – If only I had had more time.

### *Change these sentences about the past into ones that are about the present or future.*

- I could speak Chinese quite well – I can speak Chinese quite well.
- I used to use a fax all the time – I use a fax all the time.
- He would always arrive late for meetings, even ones he had asked for. – He always arrives late for meetings, even ones he has asked for.
- If I'd stayed just 15 minutes more, I'd have got into a fight. – If I stayed just 15 minutes more, I'd get into a fight.
- I wish I hadn't accepted so many projects. – I wish I didn't accept so many projects.
- If only I had had more time to talk to him. – I wish I had more time to talk to him.

*Cards to hold up, one of each per person.*

**Past**

**Not past**

**Past**

**Not past**

**Past**

**Not past**

**Past**

**Not past**