**Subjunctive Mood**

**The subjunctive mood** is used to talk about actions or states that are in doubt or not factual.

**Part A**

**Present Subjunctive**

Principal: I am **recommending** that Mrs. Robinson **stay** home until after her baby is born.

Jenny: When is her baby due?

Principal: Around September 15th. I **requested** that she **return** to school in January.

Mark: Who is going to teach us until then?

Principal: Ms. Shaw. I **insist** you **be** as respectful to her as you are to Mrs. Robinson!

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### Grammar Explanation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words of suggestion: propose, recommend, recommendation, suggest, suggestion, advise, advisable, critical, desirable, important, vital, urge</th>
<th>The doctor <strong>suggested</strong> I <strong>sleep</strong> more. It is <strong>important</strong> that he <strong>sleep</strong> more. The doctor’s <strong>suggestion</strong> is that they <strong>sleep</strong> more. It is <strong>advisable</strong> that she <strong>sleep</strong> more.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words of demand: demand, imperative, insist, necessary, order, require, required</td>
<td>My parents have <strong>demanded</strong> that I <strong>be</strong> quiet at night. Your parents <strong>require</strong> that you <strong>be</strong> quiet at night. It will be <strong>imperative</strong> that she <strong>be</strong> quiet at night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words of request: ask, beg, prefer, request, wish</td>
<td>I <strong>ask</strong> that you <strong>have</strong> more patience with the other students. The teacher <strong>requested</strong> that Nick <strong>have</strong> his project finished earlier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make a subjunctive clause negative, add <strong>not</strong> before the subjunctive verb.</td>
<td>I <strong>recommend</strong> that you <strong>not</strong> <strong>exercise</strong> until you feel better.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The term “present” refers to the form of the subjunctive verb (base form) rather than the time in which the action happens. The verb in the main clause may be in any tense.

**In subjunctive sentences, the word that is sometimes omitted after certain verbs (propose, suggest, insist). It is not usually omitted in other contexts.**
Exercise 1  Match the sentence parts.

1. My tutor prefers that we be quiet during the test.
2. It’s advisable that you keep the bandage on for a few days.
3. Tom suggested we go fishing.
4. Her math teacher advised that she apply to Harvard.
5. Mom insisted that Bob make a travel plan before he goes away.
6. Our French teacher demanded that we meet twice a week.

Exercise 2  Circle the correct answers.

1. Victor suggested that I (gets / got / get) more exercise.
2. They demanded that we (do not be / are not being / not be) so loud.
3. I recommend that you (look / looking / to look) for a job that isn’t so stressful.
4. Nina asked that we (not disturb / did not disturb / are not disturb) her.
5. The weather reporter said it was advisable that we (taking / take / to take) an umbrella today.
6. The owner of the restaurant requested that he (smokes / smoke / to smoke) outside.
7. The police officer insisted that I (not show / didn’t show / to not show) him my license, but I did!
8. It is critical that you (not eat / do not eat / did not eat) anything the night before your surgery.
**Practice 2**

**Exercise 1**

Underline the mistakes in the sentences. Write the corrections using the present subjunctive.

1. Her doctor ordered her remain in bed. ________________

2. The commander ordered that the thief is arrested. ________________

3. The police asked them avoid driving during the storm. ________________

4. It is necessary we'll pack enough food for the hiking trip. ________________

5. The waiter’s recommendation was she order the pancakes. ________________

6. The bank manager demanded that he pays the debt on time. ________________

**Exercise 2**

Unscramble the sentences.

1. suggested / l / they / scenic / route. / the / take
   → **I suggested they take the scenic route.**

2. students / the / be / recommend / l / that / polite.
   → **The students are recommended to be polite.**

3. a / new / start / He / proposed / that / she / hobby.
   → **He proposed that she take up a new hobby.**

4. citizens / taxes. / The / insists / that all / pay / government
   → **The government insists that all citizens pay taxes.**

5. imperative / students / It / to do / properly. / that / research / learn / is
   → **It is imperative for students to do their research properly.**

6. demanded / The father / a traditional / have / wedding. / daughter / his / that
   → **The father demanded that his daughter have a traditional wedding.**
Exercise 1

Fill in the blanks with the words from the box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>go</th>
<th>let</th>
<th>do</th>
<th>choose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Steve:** Hey Jo, what’s up? Are you planning our surfing holiday?

**Jo:** No, my parents are insisting that I not 1 ____________.

**Steve:** Why? Is it because it’s too dangerous?

**Jo:** Yeah, they asked that we 2 ____________ a safer activity. My sister suggested that we 3 ____________ something in the city.

**Steve:** How about we go sightseeing in Beijing instead?

**Jo:** That’s an idea. I’ll propose that they 4 ____________ me do that. I’ll call you if they agree.

Exercise 2

Answer the questions about the above reading using the present subjunctive.

1. Did Jo’s parents agree to their planned surfing trip?
   → _____________________________

2. What did Jo’s parents request?
   → _____________________________

3. What did Jo’s sister suggest?
   → _____________________________

4. What will Jo do next?
   → _____________________________
Dear friends,

I’m having a great time here in Canada. So far, I have gone skiing, ice skating, and fishing. If it’s sunny tomorrow, we might even go camping! There’s so much to do. If I were back home, I wouldn’t be doing all these fun things. I wish you were all here with me. If only you weren’t so busy, you could join me. Well, hope to see you soon.

Your friend,
Claire

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**Grammar Explanation**

The past subjunctive* is formed with the past form of a verb that describes a state, condition, or habit. It is used to talk about hypothetical or imaginary situations. With the verb be, the form were (not was) is usually used for all subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After the verb wish to express an unfulfilled desire</td>
<td>I wish Sally were here to help us.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He wishes he could run faster.</td>
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<tr>
<td>After if (only) in second conditional sentences (followed by a clause with would, could, or might)</td>
<td>If people drove smaller cars, we would all breathe cleaner air.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If I were taller, I could reach the top shelf. You might like her if you knew her better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the verbs suppose and imagine, expressing unreal conditions (usually followed by a sentence with would or could)</td>
<td>Suppose you met the president. What would you say? Imagine you were rich. What could you do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After as though or as if to make a comparison to an imaginary condition</td>
<td>She acts as though she were very rich, but she’s not. He drives as if he were in a Formula 1 race.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The term "past" refers to the form of the subjunctive verb (past simple) rather than the time in which the action happens. All of the examples above are about the present.
Exercise 1  Match the sentence parts.

1. Imagine we could •  a. were nicer today.
2. I wish the weather •  b. if their parents approved.
3. I could go to the party •  c. I would forgive him.
4. If he said he was sorry, •  d. though she were a native speaker.
5. She speaks Japanese as •  e. if I were not sick.
6. They would get married •  f. travel to Mars.

Exercise 2  Unscramble the sentences.

1. knew / wish / my sister's / I / secret. / I
   → I wish I knew my sister's secret.

2. happier / she / be / rich? / if / Would / she / were
   → __________________________________________________________

3. little boy / as if / talks / a man. / The / were / he
   → __________________________________________________________

4. you / Imagine / the oldest / children. / of six / were
   → __________________________________________________________

5. speak / could / he / English / fluently. / He / wishes
   → __________________________________________________________

6. she / raise / the answer, / she knew / her hand. / would / If
   → __________________________________________________________
Practice 2

Exercise 1  Rewrite the sentences in the second conditional (using *if* and the past subjunctive).

1. It can’t fly because it doesn’t have wings.
   → *If it had wings, it could fly.*

2. She can’t get a job because she is so lazy.
   → *

3. He doesn’t keep his promises, so I don’t trust him.
   → *

4. I am able to see well because I’m wearing my glasses.
   → *

5. I can’t write to Jane because I don’t know her address.
   → *

6. She can’t buy a new car because she doesn’t have enough money.
   → *

Exercise 2  Look at the pictures. Complete the sentences.

1. Julie runs as if ________________________________.

2. Lisa cries as though ________________________________.

3. Tony plays soccer as if ________________________________.

4. Kevin speaks as though ________________________________.
Grammar in Use

Exercise 1
Fill in the blanks with the words from the box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>imagine</th>
<th>had</th>
<th>would</th>
<th>as if</th>
<th>wish</th>
<th>were</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. I ___wish___ you were here. We're having an exciting time in Hong Kong. The food is great, and the buildings are so tall. The weather is so hot, though! 2 _________ that the weather back home were hot and humid every night. That's what it's like here! Yesterday, we were in a taxi. The driver was driving 3 _________ we were in a race. Suddenly, we crashed into another taxi. The two drivers were yelling at each other, and it looked as though they 4 _________ going to fight. Eventually, we got back to our hotel OK. The trip has been perfect so far, except I wish our room 5 _________ air conditioning. If it did, it 6 _________ be a lot more comfortable.

Your friend,
Andy

Exercise 2
Answer the questions with your own information.

1. If you could visit any city, where would you go?
   → __________________________________________________________

2. What would you do if you visited Hong Kong?
   → __________________________________________________________

3. If your taxi were hit by another taxi, how would you feel?
   → __________________________________________________________

4. Suppose you were in a taxi and the driver were driving too fast. What would you do?
   → __________________________________________________________
Part C  Review

Exercise 1  Circle the correct answers.

1. Jerry requested that Kim (helps / help) him with his essay.
2. I suggest that he (finishes / finish) his homework by midnight.
3. My mother insists that my father (exercise / exercises) regularly.
4. Is it really necessary that Gail and I (to attend / attend) this meeting?
5. It is important that you (be given / will given) your medication by a qualified nurse.
6. He recommended that I (took care / take care) to study longer than twenty minutes for the next test.

Exercise 2  Rewrite the sentences in the past subjunctive. Use the given words.

1. She sings as well as a pop star.  as if
   → She sings as if she were a pop star.
2. I'm short, so I can't dunk a basketball.  taller
   → __________________________________________
3. If it's sunny tomorrow, I'll go to the beach.  now
   → __________________________________________
4. Pretend that you're homeless. What will you do?  suppose
   → __________________________________________
5. Three players on our team are injured, so we'll probably lose.  healthy... win
   → __________________________________________
6. Charlotte wants to work at a bookstore so that she can get a discount on books.  wish
   → __________________________________________
Part C

UNIT

Past Perfect Subjunctive (Third Conditional)

The past perfect subjunctive is also called the third conditional. Like second conditional sentences, third conditional sentences talk about unreal situations. However, they are about the past. They are formed like this:

If clause → Result clause
If subject + past perfect verb, subject + would/could/might have + past participle.

1. If they had eaten lunch, they wouldn't have been hungry.

2. If she hadn't forgotten her book, she would have studied yesterday.

3. You might have enjoyed the party if you had come.

Quick Check

Circle the correct answers.

1. If she (hadn't / hasn't) met Tim, she wouldn't have gotten married.
2. We could (have won / won) the big game if we had practiced more.
3. I might have failed if you (hadn't helped / wouldn't have helped) me.
4. If I had known you were waiting for me, I (would have / had) walked faster.