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Grammar Reference

The past subjunctive

A - Formation

The **past subjunctive** of all verbs except '**to be**' is identical to the **indicative**.

The verb '**to be**' is conjugated as '**were**' in **all** persons.

In **speech**, '**was**' is often used in the first and third persons singular (e.g. 'I **was**', 'he **was**').

B - Use

The **past subjunctive** follows '**if**', '**if only**', '**as though** / **as if**', '**even if**' (as a hypothesis), '**wish**', '**suppose**', '**imagine**', other expressions of desire, appearance, and hypothesis; and, at times, '**unless**'.

Example:

If I **were** (or I **was**) you, I would tell him the truth.
I **suppose** you **were** not at the bus station, then.
She left **even though** she **seemed** to be happy.

'To let'

- Permission is expressed using '**let**' + **object** + **infinitive without 'to.'**

Example: They **let their child do** what he wants.

- '**Let**' can also be used as an imperative auxiliary.

Example: **Let** her **do** what she likes.
Let me just **deal with** this lady first.

Note.

A sentence formed with **let** to express permission **cannot be used** in the passive. The expression **'to be allowed to'** is therefore used.

Example:

The child **is allowed to** do what he wants.

- The infinitive without 'to' may be **implied**.

Example:

She would like to go to India but her parents won't **let** her.