



Can these ever be right?

I were a teacher



What looks wrong  
with these?

he sit still

she run the race again

Could they ever be  
right?



# Subjunctive Form

The subjunctive is a verb form that is used quite rarely in very formal language.

It expresses something **desired** or **imagined**.

We use it about events that somebody:

- **wants** to happen
- **anticipates** will happen
- **imagines** happening

We will learn about two ways to use the subjunctive:

**Requests**

and

**If...were pattern**



## Subjunctive Form

If I were a teacher, I would be kind.

We insisted that he sit still.

She requested that she run the race again.



# Requests



Look at these requests.  
What do you notice?

We *ask* that students *walk* in school.

I *demand* that he *answer* my question.

We *request* that doorways *be* kept clear.

The Head *insists* that everyone *write* in pen.

I *suggest* that he *listen* carefully to me.

Verbs in simple form (*walk, answer, be*)

## Request Verbs

ask  
command  
demand  
insist  
request  
suggest

The word *that* joins the parts of the sentence.

## Verbs – simple form

Verbs usually change (inflect) according to who is doing them (person)

*I walk...you walk...he/she/it walks...they walk*

...and when they happen (tense).

*I walk...I walked*

Most verbs do not change very much but *irregular verbs* do.

*Verb: to be I am...you are...he/she/it is...they are*

*Verb: to be I was...you were...he/she/it was...they were*



The **simple form** of a verb is the infinitive, without the word 'to'.

*walk...answer...be*

In our **subjunctive** sentences, verbs appear in **simple form**.

**The ending does not change according to person.**



## If...were



Look at these sentences.  
What do you notice?

*I would go if I **were** younger.*

*If he **were** not so mean, he would buy one.*

*I **wish** the computer **were** working.*

***Suppose** she **were** here. What would you say?*

*She acts **as if** she **were** the Queen.*

Always **were**  
whoever it's about.  
(Instead of **was**).  
Formal sounding.

**if**  
**as if**  
**wish**  
**suppose**

The sentences are  
about something  
desired or  
imagined.

# We use the subjunctive in formal language.

Subjunctive form – very formal

Formal: use 'were'

I would go if I **were** younger.

I'd tell her if I **were** you.

It's not as if I **were** always late!

Suppose she **were** here – what would you say then?

I wish that I **weren't** so slow!



Give the same information less formally

Informal: use 'was'

If I **was** younger, I would go.

*We don't say, "if I was you" even when speaking informally!*

It's not as if I **was** always late!

Suppose she **was** right here – what would you say then?

I wish that I **wasn't** so slow!

