

Did you call Annie yet? (GB: Have you called . . . ?)
I already told you. (GB: I've already told you.)

- 7 Still, yet and already can also be used to talk about actions and events that were going on, or are expected, around a particular past or future time.

I still couldn't decide, so I asked George what he thought.
The sun wasn't up yet, and it was bitterly cold.
I already knew what I wanted.
Will you still love me when I'm old and grey?
It's no good arriving on the 20th; they won't be there yet.
This time tomorrow I shall already be in America.

- 8 Still and yet can have other meanings (for example, with comparatives they mean 'even'). For details, see the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English.

subjunctive

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- 1 The *subjunctive* is the name of a special group of verb-forms (e.g. *I were, she be, he return*) which are used in a few cases to talk about events which are not certain to happen – which we hope will happen, or imagine might happen, or want to happen.

If I were rich I wouldn't work at all.

It is vital that she be warned before it is too late.

The judge recommended that he not be released for at least three years.

The subjunctive is not very common in modern British English, and is used mostly in formal style. Ideas of this kind are usually expressed in other ways.

- 2 The forms of the subjunctive are as follows:

a to be

present tense: *I be, you be, he be, we be, they be*

past tense: *I were, you were, he were, we were, they were*

b other verbs

all present and past subjunctive forms are the same as the infinitive:
e.g. *I go, you go, he go, etc*

- 3 The subjunctive form *were* is often used instead of *was* after *if, as if, and I wish*. (It can also be used after words like *suppose*, when they have a similar meaning to *if*.) *Was* is also possible in these cases, and is more common in conversational English.

I wouldn't mind if he weren't so rude. (Or: . . . if he wasn't . . .)
I wish it were Tuesday today. (Or: *I wish it was* . . .)

There is a special form of conditional sentence in which the subjunctive *were* is used with an infinitive (see 3.07.3), and this is sometimes inverted in a literary style (see 3.07.6). *Was* is not possible here.

If he were to tell us everything, we could try to solve his problem.
(Or: **Were he to tell us everything, . . .**)

In the expression *If I were you, were* is almost always used instead of *was*. (For more information about this expression, see 5.53.)

I should be a bit more careful if I were you.

Were is always used in the expression *as if were* (meaning the same as *so to speak*).

He's a sort of Japanese Marlon Brando, as it were.

- 4 Other subjunctives are used in certain cases where we say that something should be done. This happens especially in two structures:

1 after the verbs *order, command, insist, demand, request, ask, recommend, propose, suggest*, and other verbs with similar meanings, followed by *that*;

2 in the construction *it is important/vital/essential/necessary/desirable that . . .* (other adjectives with similar meanings can also be used in this structure).

The subjunctive is the same whether the sentence is present or past.

We insist that a meeting be held as soon as possible.

The committee recommended that the company invest in new property.

It is essential that every child have the same educational opportunities.

He said it was important that every member send his subscription by the end of the month.

In British English, these structures are unusual. Instead of the subjunctive, we more often use *should + infinitive*.

We insist that a meeting should be held as soon as possible.

The committee recommended that the company should invest in new property.

And in conversational English, other structures would probably be used (e.g. . . . *recommended the company to invest . . .*).

For information about the *should*-structure, see 5.52.

In American English, these subjunctive structures are quite common in a formal style, but in informal conversation Americans would probably also find different ways of expressing the ideas.

- 5 There are some fixed expressions containing subjunctives. The commonest are: *God save the King/Queen; Long live . . .; Be that as it may, . . .; Heaven forbid.*