

-(으)ㄹ 걸 그랬다

I should have

Regret about a choice you did not make. Built on -(으)ㄹ 것 plus 그러다, and it only ever looks at your own past.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Ends in a vowel	-ㄹ 걸 그랬다	가다 → 갈 걸 그랬어요
Ends in a consonant	-을 걸 그랬다	먹다 → 먹을 걸 그랬어요
Ends in ㄹ	nothing added	만들다 → 만들 걸 그랬어요
Regret about doing	-지 말 걸 그랬다	먹지 말 걸 그랬어요
Casual mutter	-(으)ㄹ 걸	갈걸
Own actions only	not about others	그 사람이 갈 걸 그랬어요 is wrong

WHEN TO USE IT

Attachment is the standard rule with the ㄹ short form: 만들다 gives 만들 걸 그랬어요. 걸 is a contraction of 것을, so it takes a space.

It says you wish you had chosen otherwise: 우산을 가져올 걸 그랬어요. The regret is about your own action — you cannot use it to say what somebody else should have done.

For regret about something you did do, negate the first verb: 그렇게 많이 먹지 말 걸 그랬어요. Note that the negative uses 말다, as prohibitions do.

In casual speech it shortens to -(으)ㄹ 걸, often muttered to yourself: 갈걸. Here it is written joined.

IN USE

- 1 비가 오네요. 우산을 가져올 걸 그랬어요.
It's raining. I should have brought an umbrella.
- 2 그렇게 많이 먹지 말 걸 그랬어요.
I shouldn't have eaten so much.
- 3 어제 일찍 잘 걸 그랬어요.
I should have gone to bed early yesterday.
- 4 집에서 만들 걸 그랬어요. 밖은 너무 비싸요.
I should have made it at home — eating out is so expensive.
- 5 그때 물어볼 걸 그랬어요.
I should have asked at the time.

6 아, 그냥 살걸.

Ah, I should've just bought it.

COMPARED WITH

-았/었어야 했다

-았/었어야 했다 states an obligation you failed to meet and can apply to anyone. -(으)ㄹ 걸 그랬다 is a personal wish about your own choice, and sounds softer.

일찍 잘 걸 그랬어요. (I wish I had) / 일찍 잤어야 했어요. (I ought to have)

-는 게 좋겠다

Advice looks forward; this ending looks back. The same situation gives one before the fact and the other after.

우산을 가져가는 게 좋겠어요. (before) / 가져올 걸 그랬어요. (after)

-지 말 걸 그랬다

The negative half. Use it when the regret is about something you actually did, and note that it is built on 말다 rather than 않다.

갈 걸 그랬어요. (should have gone) / 가지 말 걸 그랬어요. (shouldn't have gone)

WATCH OUT

X 집에서 만들 **을** 걸 그랬어요.

O 집에서 만들 **걸** 그랬어요.

A stem ending in ㄹ already supplies it, as with 만들 거예요 and 만들 테니까.

X 그 사람이 일찍 **올** 걸 그랬어요.

O 그 사람이 일찍 **왔으면 좋았을** 텐데요.

This ending only expresses regret about your own choices. For someone else, use a wish construction instead.

X 많이 먹지 **않을** 걸 그랬어요.

O 많이 먹지 **말** 걸 그랬어요.

The negative here is built on 말다, as with -지 마세요 and -지 말자.