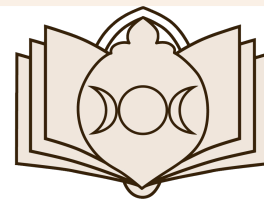


Second Conditional



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01 / Meaning & use | B1-B2

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Imagine a different reality. Your grammar may dream responsibly.

What are we imagining?

Use the second conditional for imagined, unlikely or unreal situations in the present or future and their hypothetical results. The past form expresses distance from reality; it does not normally refer to past time here.

IF + PAST SIMPLE, WOULD + BASE VERB

If I had a private library, I'd spend every evening there.

An unreal present situation

If I lived closer, I'd walk to work. (I don't live close enough.)

An unlikely future possibility

If I won a writing competition, I'd celebrate with my friends.

Advice

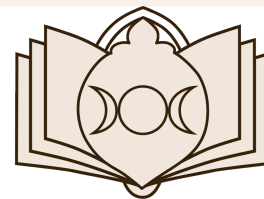
If I were you, I'd ask for more information.

Two clauses, one condition

The if-clause gives the condition. The main clause gives the result. A conditional is a relationship between ideas, not just a verb recipe.



Second Conditional



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02 / Forms, comparisons & grammar gremlins

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Build the spell

Would + base verb goes in the result clause: If she knew, she would help. Do not normally put would in the if-clause. Would not = wouldn't. I'd go = I would go. The imagined situation can be present or future.

Clause order & punctuation

If the if-clause comes first, normally add a comma:

If I had a private library, I'd spend every evening there.

If the main clause comes first, normally use no comma. The meaning stays the same.

Compare the meaning

First: If I get the job, I'll move. = a real possibility in my view.

Second: If I got the job, I'd move. = I present it as more hypothetical or less likely.

The difference reflects the speaker's view, not a fixed percentage of probability.

Useful variations

With hypothetical BE, WERE is possible for every subject and is especially common in formal English and "If I were you": If she were here, she'd know what to do. WAS is also common with I / he / she / it in informal English. COULD expresses ability or possibility; MIGHT expresses a possible result: If I had a car, I could drive you home.

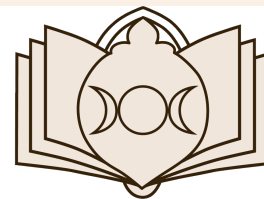
Questions

What would you do if you lost your phone? Would you move if you got the job?

The question word or auxiliary belongs in the main question. The if-clause keeps statement word order. No extra grammatical gymnastics needed.



Second Conditional



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03 / Practice: put the spell to work

1. Complete the sentences

Use the standard second conditional pattern. Write the full verb forms.

1. If I _____ (have) more time, I _____ (read) more.
2. If she _____ (know) the answer, she _____ (tell) us.
3. We _____ (travel) more if tickets _____ (not / cost) so much.
4. If I _____ (be) you, I _____ (not / accept) that offer. (Use were.)
5. He _____ (feel) better if he _____ (sleep) more.
6. If they _____ (live) nearby, we _____ (see) them more often.

2. A little context

Use the second conditional with WOULD in the result clauses.

If I (1) _____ (own) a bookshop, I (2) _____ (create) a cosy reading corner. If customers (3) _____ (want) recommendations, I (4) _____ (help) them. I (5) _____ (not / sell) terrible coffee if I (6) _____ (have) a café too. Haunted shelves? Perhaps. Bad coffee? Never.

3. Fix the grammar gremlins

1. If I would have time, I would help.

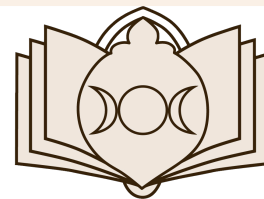
2. She would buys a car if she had enough money.

3. If he knows the answer, he would tell us. (Make it hypothetical.)



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Second Conditional



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04 / Your turn & answer key

4. Rewrite without changing the meaning

I don't have a car, so I can't drive you home. (Use if and could.)

5. Your turn

Write four second conditional sentences: an imagined home, a dream job, an unlikely opportunity and advice using If I were you.

Answer key: the spell check

1. had; would read
2. knew; would tell
3. would travel; didn't cost
4. were; wouldn't accept
5. would feel; slept
6. lived; would see

2. 1. owned; 2. would create; 3. wanted; 4. would help; 5. wouldn't sell; 6. had

- 3.
 1. If I had time, I would help.
 2. She would buy a car if she had enough money.
 3. If he knew the answer, he would tell us.
 4. If I had a car, I could drive you home.
 5. Sample ideas: If I worked from home, I'd save time. If I were you, I'd check the contract.
- Your answers may differ. Check the time, meaning and verb forms. Full and contracted forms are both acceptable.

