

If + past, would + infinitive (second conditional) – A2

Main theme addressed	In this lesson, you will learn how to use the if + present, will + infinitive construction or first conditional.
Key Goals	<p>Here is an outline of what you will learn today:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to form if + past, would + infinitive (second conditional) in various syntactic contexts 2. How to recognize different contexts where the second conditional is used 3. Use the second conditional

1. How to form 'if + past, would + infinitive (second conditional) in various syntactic contexts

In second conditional sentences, the structure is usually:

if + past simple, ...would + infinitive

In formal or written language, we can use 'were' instead of 'was' with 'I' and 'he/she/it'.

Examples:

If I **was/were** rich, I **would buy** a house.

If I **lived** in Spain, I **wouldn't be** cold.

2. How to recognize different contexts where the second conditional is used?

The second conditional has two uses.

a) We can use it to talk about things in the **future** that are **imaginary** and that are probably **not going to come true**.

It might be something you are dreaming about.

Examples:

If I was rich, I would travel around the world.

If I met the president, I would say hello.

If I lost my keys, I would be in trouble.

If I missed his birthday, my best friend would be very angry.

b) We can use it to talk about something in the **present** which is **impossible**, because it's **not true**.

Examples:

If I had his number, I would call him.

If I was president, I would lower the taxes.

How does it differ from the first conditional?

The action expressed in the second conditional is a lot less likely to happen than the first conditional.

Examples:

Second conditional: If I had a lot of money, I would buy a huge house with a swimming pool. (a very unlikely scenario)

First conditional: If I have enough money next week, I will buy a new coat. (a more likely scenario)

Exercise:

Fill the gap in the following sentences with the correct alternative.

1. If I was taller, I _____ wear high heels.
 - would have to / wouldn't have to / won't have to
2. If you bought a new car, you _____ travel so much.
 - wouldn't be able to / would be able to / won't be able to
3. If you knew the answer, you _____ ask.
 - would have to / will have to / wouldn't have to
4. If you wanted to travel around the world, you _____ a lot of money.
 - wouldn't need / would need / will need

3. Use the second conditional

Now you are ready to try formulating the second conditional yourself. Have a look at the following exercises. Enjoy!

Exercise:

Complete the sentence with the appropriate form of second conditional.

1. If you were the president, what _____ (you/do)?
2. If Mike _____ a millionaire, he would give all his money to charity.
3. If we were old, we _____ (not/be able to run) so fast.
4. I _____ (move) to the Caribbean if I my whole family didn't live in Europe.
5. I _____ (like) to live in Australia if it wasn't so far away.
6. If I _____ children, I wouldn't have any free time.
7. If he _____ (get up) up earlier, he'd get to work on time.
8. Your parents _____ (be) a lot happier if you called them every week.
9. If I were you, I _____ (not/worry) about money so much.

Exercise:

Complete the sentences with the appropriate form of second conditional.

1. _____ (you/buy) a sports car if you had the money?
2. If you ask me, I _____ (not/go) to this restaurant, the food is awful.
3. If we _____ (have) enough money, we would stay in a nice hotel.
4. If I lived in France, I _____ (have to/learn) French well.
5. If you _____ (not/live) so far away, I would visit you more often.
6. If he didn't give me a present on my birthday, I _____ (be) very angry.
7. If I lost my job, I _____ (not/be able to) pay my mortgage.
8. If you moved to Spain, I _____ (come) with you!
9. If you didn't take the job, you _____ (regret) it later on.

Exercise:

Complete the sentence with the appropriate form of second conditional.

1. It _____ (be) nice if it _____ (not/snow).
2. If Mary _____ (be) there, she _____ (prepare) a nice meal.
3. I _____ (worry) about my rent so much if I _____ (have) more money.
4. If you _____ (tell) me the truth, I _____ (not/be) so upset.
5. If I _____ (speak) perfect English, I _____ (have) a better job.
6. I _____ (become) rich and famous if I _____ (marry) a film star.

Learn More:

<https://www.perfect-english-grammar.com/second-conditional.html>

<https://www.grammar.cl/english/second-conditional.htm>

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar/intermediate-to-upper-intermediate/conditionals-1>