

The Second Conditional

The second conditional is used to talk about situations that are either impossible or highly unlikely.

Eg. *If I won the lottery, I would buy a helicopter.*

Winning the lottery is actually possible, but it is highly unlikely to happen, therefore second conditional is used.

The structure of second conditional is: If + past simple, would + infinitive.

Eg. *If I won the lottery, I would buy a thousand kittens.*

If+ past simple would+ infinitive

However, the structure of any conditional statement can be reversed.

Eg. *I would buy a helicopter if I won the lottery.*

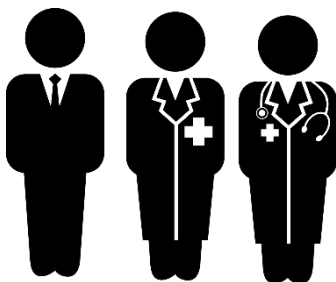
Note: In second conditional the verb "be" becomes "were."

Eg. *If I were taller, I would be a great basketball player.*

1. Read the four statements and underline at least six second conditional sentences.

Karl: *If I ruled the world, I would raise taxes on big businesses. I think if large companies paid more taxes, we could help poor people a lot more.* Poverty is the biggest issue in a lot of countries and could be solved by spreading the wealth around more. At the moment, the gap between the rich and the poor is far too large. *If we taxed the rich more, we could put more money into social programs that help homeless people.*

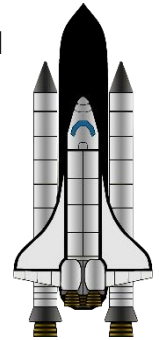
Ronald: *If I ruled the world, I would privatize a lot of things.* I think healthcare, transportation, and schools are better off under the leadership of companies. The government is too big and slow to be in charge of those areas. *If we privatised them, I think our society would be a lot more efficient.* For example, *I think hospitals would run a lot better if they didn't have to worry about all these government rules and regulations.*




Greta: *I think I would focus a lot on the environment if I ruled the world. If we don't stop climate change now, the future will be very difficult for our children.* For example, we should ban plastic bags, and try to cut down on plastic in general. And we should fine companies for polluting too much. *They would be more careful with their waste if they had to pay more for it.*



Darth: *If I ruled the world, I would increase the working week to a six day week.* I have always thought that Sundays are a waste of time. *If we forced everyone to work 50 or 60 hours a week, the economy would explode!* Speaking of explosions, I would also greatly increase our military budget. If we don't make more bombs and guns, somebody will attack us. Also, we should invest heavily in space travel and landing on other planets. *If we started that now, who knows where we could be in a few decades?*



 2. Who do you agree with and disagree with the most from exercise 1? Try to make 4 second conditional sentences to say why you agree or disagree with them.

E.g. *"If we had a 6 day work week, everybody would be tired all the time."*

1.
2.
3.
4.

 3. Fill in the blanks using the verb in brackets:

- a) If you *had* (have) a job, you *wouldn't be* (not, be) so broke!
- b) If Jane *didn't have* (not, have) six kids, she *would open* (open) a hair salon.
- c) They *would buy* (buy) a car if they *had* (have) enough money.
- d) Everyone *would work* (work) a four day week if I *were* (be) the CEO.
- e) If Jake *studied* (study) harder, he *would pass* (pass) his exams.
- f) I *would quit* (quit) my job tomorrow if I *won* (win) the lottery.
- g) If I *didn't have to* (not/have to) work late, I *would come* (come) to your party.
- h) I *wouldn't wear* (not/wear) glasses if I *didn't need* (not/need) them.

 4. Read the suggestions below and make second conditional statements for what you think would happen if we did them.

a) We should ban almost all cars and make everybody ride bikes to work.

.....
b) We should stop trading with other countries and just make everything we need here.

.....
c) We should raise taxes on large businesses and make sure they pay them.

.....
d) We should get rid of health insurance, people can pay for their own health issues.

The second conditional also talks about something in the present, which you can't do.

E.g. *I would call her if I had her number.*

 5. Turn the two sentences below into one second conditional statement.

a) He can't come on holiday with us. He doesn't have enough money.

.....
E.g. *If he had enough money, he would come on holiday with us.*

b) I don't live near my parents. I don't see them very often.

If I lived near my parents, I would see them more often

c) I'm sorry, I don't have that information. I can't tell you.

If I had that information, I would tell you.

d) I don't have a car. Because of that, I don't go on many weekend trips.

If I had a car, I would go on more weekend trips.

e) My boss doesn't like me. That's why I never get promoted.

If my boss liked me, I would get promoted

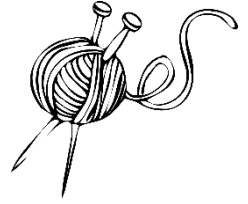
f) I'm not good at math. I don't think I will ever be an engineer.

If I were good at math, I could be an engineer.



6. Think about three things you would like to do but can't and make second conditional sentences about them.

Eg. *If I had more time I would learn to knit.*



- 1).....
- 2).....
- 3).....



7. Pairwork: Listen to your partner's sentences and try to ask questions about them.

Eg. *"If I had more time I would learn to knit."*

"What type of things would you knit?"

The second conditional can also be used to give advice.
 Eg. *I wouldn't sign that contract if I were you.*



8. Read the statements below and give advice using "If I were you" statements.

a) "I've just moved into an empty apartment, I want to get some furniture but I don't have much money."

E.g. *"If I were you I'd look on e-bay and get some second hand furniture."*

b) I have 2 months off, I want to travel but I don't know where I should go.

c) I inherited \$50,000, I don't know if I should invest it or just put it in my bank account.

d) I'm going to buy my first car soon, but I really don't know what to look for in a car.

e) My girlfriend wants to move in with me, but she has a dog that barks all the time.



9. Ask and answer the following questions with a partner.



<p>If you could solve one problem the world is currently facing, what would it be?</p>	<p>If you could travel back in time and give some advice to your teenage self, what would it be?</p>
<p>If you were offered a free ticket to the moon, would you take it?</p>	<p>What would you do if you found a suitcase with £100,000 in it?</p>
<p>If you could take a year off from everything to do whatever you wanted, what would you do?</p>	<p>If you could be famous for something, would you want to be? What would you be famous for?</p>
<p>If you could have a superpower, what would it be?</p>	<p>If you had to choose between being deaf and being blind, which would you choose?</p>
<p>If you had to choose between travelling back or forward in time, what would you choose and why?</p>	<p>If you could meet anyone dead or alive, who would you meet?</p>
<p>If you were offered the job of President of your country, would you take it?</p>	<p>If you had to live in a different country, what country would it be and why?</p>
<p>If you could speak 1 foreign language perfectly, which language would you choose?</p>	<p>If you had more free time, what would you do?</p>
<p>If a film was made about your life, what genre would it be?</p>	<p>If you won the lottery, what would you do?</p>
<p>If you could only eat one country's food for the rest of your life, which would it be?</p>	<p>If you were invisible for a day, what would you do?</p>
<p>If you could easily stop a habit that you have, what would it be?</p>	<p>If you could easily start a new habit, what would it be?</p>

