

SECOND CONDITIONAL

SECOND CONDITIONAL (1)

There is an unreal possibility that the condition will happen.

IF	CONDITION	RESULT
If	PAST SIMPLE	WOULD + BASE VERB
If	you studied	you would pass the exam.
If	I married Lucy	I would be happy.
If	it snowed next July	would you be surprised?

Sometimes, we use **should**, **could** or **might** instead of **would**:

- a) If I won a million dollars, I **could** stop working.

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SECOND CONDITIONAL (2)

RESULT	IF	CONDITION
WOULD + BASE VERB	if	PAST SIMPLE
You would pass the exam	if	you studied.
I would be happy	if	I married Lucy.
Would you be surprised	if	it snowed next July?

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USAGE

The Second Conditional is used to talk about **'impossible'** situations.

- a) If we were in London today, we would be able to go to the concert in Hyde Park.
 b) If I had 2 million dollars, I'd give a lot to charity.
 c) If everyone had clean water to drink, there would be a lot less disease.

The Second Conditional is also used to talk about **'unlikely'** situations.

- d) If I went to China, I'd visit the Great Wall.
 e) If I was the President, I'd reduce taxes.
 f) If you were in my position, you'd understand.

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Note that after I / he / she / it we often use the subjunctive form **'were'** and not **'was'**.

- a) If she were happy in her job, she wouldn't be looking for another one.
 b) If I were Japanese, I'd have sushi every day.

Note the form 'If I were you' which is often used to **give advice**.

- c) If I were you, I'd look for a new place to live.
 d) If I were you, I'd go back to school and get more qualifications.

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The choice between the first and the second conditional is often a question of **the speaker's attitude** rather than of facts.

Compare these examples. John thinks these things are possible, Mark doesn't.

- John – If I win the lottery, I'll buy a big house.
 Mark – If I won the lottery, I'd buy a big house.
 John – If I get promoted, I'll throw a big party.
 Mark – If I got promoted, I'd throw a big party.

John – If my team win the Cup, I'll buy champagne for everybody.

Mark – If my team won the Cup, I'd buy champagne for everybody.

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WITH MODALS

The main clause can contain **should**, **could** or **might** instead of **would**:

- a) If I won a million dollars, I **could** stop working.
- b) If I had the chance to do it again, I **would** do it differently.
- c) If we met up for lunch, we **could** go to that new restaurant.
- d) If I spoke to him directly, I **might** be able to persuade him.

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First or second conditional?

- 1) Please eat your soup. If you _____ your soup now, it _____ cold. [NOT EAT – GO]
- 2) If he _____ taller, he _____ be a policeman, but he's too short. [BE – CAN]
- 3) If I _____ Peter this afternoon, I _____ him the news. [SEE – TELL]
- 4) I have to work about 80 hours a week. If I _____ more time, I _____ a sport like tennis. [HAVE – TAKE UP]
- 5) If it _____ this weekend we _____ play tennis. [NOT RAIN – CAN]
- 6) If I _____ Minister of Finance, I _____ taxation. [BE – INCREASE]
- 7) If you _____ hard, you _____ your exam. [NOT STUDY – FAIL]

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First or second conditional?

- 1) When she _____ my letter, she _____ my problem. [READ – UNDERSTAND]
- 2) They _____ her the messages as soon as she _____. [GIVE – ARRIVE]
- 3) I _____ my homework as soon as this programme _____. [DO – FINISH]
- 4) If I _____ you, I _____ that coat. [BE – BUY]
- 5) That book is too expensive, so I'm not going to buy it. If the book _____ so expensive, I _____ it. [NOT BE – BUY]
- 6) I have to work tomorrow evening, so I can't meet you. If I _____ to work tomorrow evening, I _____ meet you. [NOT HAVE – CAN]
- 7) (The phone isn't working). If the phone _____ working, I _____ call you. [BE – CAN]
- 8) If I get home in time, I _____ you. [CALL]

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First or second conditional?

- 1) I _____ the house until the postman _____. [NOT LEAVE – CALL]
- 2) There are mice in your kitchen. If you _____ a cat, the mice _____ immediately. [HAVE – DISAPPEAR]
- 3) The style of that dress is lovely, but I'm not so keen on the colour. If the blue _____ a bit lighter, it _____ better. [BE – LOOK]
- 4) What noisy neighbours you've got! If mine _____ as bad as yours, I _____ crazy. [BE – GO]
- 5) If I _____ £ 10,000, I _____ round the world. [WIN – TRAVEL]
- 6) What would happen if I _____ that red button? [PRESS]
- 7) If I _____ a lot of money, I _____ to go to work. [WIN – NOT HAVE]

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Second conditional

- 1) If I (be) you, I (get) a new job.
- 2) If he (be) younger, he (travel) more.
- 3) If we (not/be) friends, I (be) angry with you.
- 4) If I (have) enough money, I (buy) a big house.
- 5) If she (not/be) always so late, she (be) promoted.
- 6) If we (win) the lottery, we (travel) the world.
- 7) If you (have) a better job, we (be) able to buy a new car.
- 8) If I (speak) perfect English, I (have) a good job.
- 9) If we (live) in Mexico, I (speak) Spanish.
- 10) If she (pass) the exam, she (be) able to enter university.

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- 11) She (be) happier if she (have) more friends.
- 12) We (buy) a house if we (decide) to stay here.
- 13) They (have) more money if they (not/buy) so many clothes.
- 14) We (come) to dinner if we (have) time.
- 15) She (call) him if she (have) his number.
- 16) They (go) to Spain on holiday if they (like) hot weather.
- 17) She (pass) the exam if she (study) more.
- 18) I (marry) someone famous if I (be) a movie star.
- 19) We (be) late again if we (buy) a new car.
- 20) You (lose) weight if you (eat) less.

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1. If I _____ more money, I would buy a car.

- a) have
- b) had
- c) would have
- d) will have

2. If she _____ how to speak French, she would not take lessons.

- a) knows
- b) know
- c) knew
- d) known

3. If he were older, he _____ vote.

- a) will
- b) could
- c) can
- d) will be able to

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4. The men would have money if they _____.

- a) work
- b) works
- c) worked
- d) working

5. What would you do if you _____ the lottery?

- a) win
- b) will win
- c) won
- d) have won

6. If Tom _____ to class, he would learn more.

- a) go
- b) goes
- c) have went
- d) went

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7. The children would do better if they _____ more time.

- a) have
- b) has
- c) having
- d) had

8. Where would you _____ if you could go anywhere in the world?

- a) go
- b) goes
- c) went
- d) have gone

9. Would you _____ to live in a big house or a small house?

- a) like
- b) likes
- c) liking
- d) liked

10. Who would you meet if you _____ meet anyone in the world?

- a) can
- b) could
- c) can't
- d) will be able

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1. If I (have) more time, I (read) more.

2. If she (win) the lottery, she (can buy) a new house.

3. Would you live in an apartment if you (live) downtown?

4. If I could play the guitar, I would (join) a band.

5. I (eat) more fruit if I (live) in Mexico.

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6. If I (play) soccer, I (be) in better shape.

7. Where would you go on vacation if you (can) go anywhere in the world?

8. Would you work in France if you (have) the chance?

9. If I could be any super hero, I (be) Superman.

10. They (wake up) early if they (work).

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1) He's so stupid! If he _____ an animal, he would be a sheep.

- a) were
- b) are
- c) was
- d) would be
- e) is

2) If her hair were black, she _____ completely different.

- a) would look
- b) looks
- c) will look
- d) look

3) We don't mind camping, but if we _____ enough money, we _____ in a hotel.

- a) had... stayed
- b) have... stayed
- c) would have...stayed
- d) had... would stay

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4) If the weather _____ better, we _____ to the park.

- a) were... will go
- b) were... would go
- c) is... would go
- d) was... go

5) If smoking were allowed, I _____ a cigarette.

- a) had
- b) will have
- c) have
- d) would have

6) If there _____ no mosquitos, there would be no malaria.

- a) is
- b) were
- c) was
- d) would be
- e) are

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7) We'd be on the beach if we _____ in Mexico!

- a) will be
- b) would be
- c) are
- d) were

8) We would learn a lot from dolphins if they _____.

- a) will talk
- b) could talk
- c) talk
- d) can talk

9) If he were a young man, he _____ able to walk faster.

- a) would be
- b) will be
- c) was
- d) is

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Sources

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