

Hypothetical Conditional

The sentences you will study in this unit have two parts: an *if* clause and a main clause. The *if* clause consists of a condition that is either slightly possible or impossible; the main clause states the consequences of the condition mentioned in the *if* clause.

SLIGHTLY POSSIBLE: If he felt better, he would come with us.

IMPOSSIBLE: If my aunt were still alive, she would be a hundred years old today.

To form a hypothetical conditional that refers to present or future time, use the simple past tense in the *if* clause; use a modal verb (either *would*, *might*, or *could*) and the base form of the main verb in the main clause.

If he **studied** more, he **would earn** better grades.

In formal English, *were* is used in the *if* clause, even following the first- and third-person singular pronouns.

If I **were** you, I would look for a job.

If she **were** here, we could leave.

To form a hypothetical conditional that refers to past time, use the past perfect in the *if* clause; use *would have*, *might have*, or *could have* and the perfect/passive form of the main verb in the main clause.

If they **had asked** earlier, I **could have** helped them.

exercise**18-1**

Complete each conditional sentence with the correct form of the verb in parentheses. Each sentence refers to either present or future time. In the main clause, use *would* before the base form of the verb.

1. If I _____ (be) the director, I _____ (change) the policy.

2. If you _____ (check) your e-mail more often, you _____ (know) about the assignments.
3. If we _____ (commute) together, the drive _____ (cost) less.
4. If he _____ (have) more time, he _____ (go) to the game with us.
5. If Emma _____ (visit) us on Thursday, she _____ (meet) my sisters.
6. If you _____ (mail) the package today, they _____ (receive) it by Friday.
7. If they _____ (lower) their prices, more people _____ (shop) there.
8. If we _____ (earn) more money, we _____ (buy) a new car.
9. If he _____ (exercise) more frequently, he _____ (be) healthier.
10. If my grandfather _____ (be) here, he _____ (tell) a joke.

exercise**18-2**

Complete each conditional sentence with the correct form of the verb in parentheses. Each sentence refers to past time. In the main clause, use *would have* before the perfect/passive form of the verb.

1. If it _____ (rain), they _____ (cancel) the game.
2. If you _____ (be) on the roller coaster, you _____ (be) sick.
3. If I _____ (know) about the detour, I _____ (take) another route.
4. If she _____ (follow) the directions, she _____ (be) on time.
5. If I _____ (study) harder, I _____ (pass) the exam.
6. If he _____ (be) more productive, he _____ (receive) a promotion.
7. If they _____ (raise) tuition, the students _____ (protest).
8. If they _____ (repair) the car yesterday, we _____ (leave) today.
9. If you _____ (revise) your paper, your main points _____ (be) clearer.
10. If I _____ (be) the manager, I _____ (hire) Yoshi.