

English Grammar – The Second Conditional (Hypothetical or Imaginary Present)

The Second Conditional is used to talk about hypothetical situations in the present.

IF	Condition	Hypothesis
	past simple	conditional present
If	I won the lottery	I would buy a new car.
If	I married Susan	I would be happy.
If	Roger was rich	Jane would marry him.
If	it snowed	would you be surprised?
If	you found \$5,000	what would you do ?

We can also use 'could' to show a possibility:

If	I won the lottery	I could buy a new car.
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Here are some examples with negative verbs:

If	I didn't win the lottery	I couldn't buy a new car.
If	I didn't marry Susan	I would be sad.
If	Roger was poor	Jane wouldn't marry him.
If	it didn't snow	would you be surprised?
If	you didn't have a car	would you walk to work?

More examples:

- If we **were** in London today, we **could go** to the concert in Hyde Park.
- If I **had** millions of dollars, I **would give** a lot of money to charity.
- If everyone **had** access to clean water, there **wouldn't be** so many sick people.
- If she **were** happy in her job, she **wouldn't look for** another. *
- If I **lived** in Japan, I **could eat** sushi every day.
- If I **were** you, I **would accept** the job. *
- If I **went** to China, I **could visit** the Great Wall.

* "were" is correct English grammar, but "was" is acceptable (through common use)

We can use contractions (I'd, he'd, etc.) as an alternative to "would":

- If I were you, **I'd** apologize to Mary.
- If she were desperate, **she'd** accept the job.
- If it were good weather today, **we'd** go to the beach.

Recommended video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBCQLJPv6MI> (2 mins)

Exercise 1. Choose the correct option:

1. If I _____ more money, I would buy a bigger car.
 - a) have
 - b) had
 - c) would have

2. If she _____ how to speak French, she wouldn't need lessons.
 - a) knows
 - b) know
 - c) knew

3. If he were older, he _____ vote.
 - a) would be
 - b) could
 - c) can

4. John would have his own money if he _____.
 - a) work
 - b) works
 - c) worked

5. What would you do if you _____ the lottery?
 - a) win
 - b) would win
 - c) won

6. If Tom _____ to all his classes, he would learn more.
 - a) go
 - b) goes
 - c) went

7. The children would learn faster if they _____ more.
 - a) study
 - b) studied
 - c) would study

Song suggestions:

If I were a Rich Man: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBHZFYpQ6nc> (6 mins)

If I were a Boy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Et6QNCptkTY> (4 mins)

Exercise 2. Complete the following using the correct forms of the verbs in brackets:

1. If I _____ (*win*) the lottery, I _____ (*travel*) around the world.
2. If he _____ (*work*) in the USA, his English _____ (*improve*).
3. If we _____ (*speak*) English, we _____ (*work*) in the USA. (*use 'could'*)
4. If you _____ (*have*) a car, you _____ (*take*) me to school. (*use 'could'*)

Exercise 3. Complete the following sentences using suitable word(s).

1. If I _____ you, I wouldn't accept the job!
2. If we _____ far from the city, we would need a second car.
3. If there _____ fewer cars on the road, there would be less pollution.
4. If the weather _____ better, we would go to the beach.
5. You would get better grades if you _____ harder for your tests.

Exercise 4. Complete the following sentences with a suitable phrase.

1. If I had a lot of money, _____.
2. If I spoke English well, _____.
3. If I saw an elephant in the street, _____.
4. If _____, I would be the happiest person in the world!
5. If _____, I would call him.
6. She would travel abroad if she _____.
7. If I _____, I wouldn't be so lonely.
8. I would _____ if my son became a doctor.

Exercise 5. Fill the gaps using the verbs in brackets. Sometimes the verb must be negative!

- 1 They would be a better team if they _____ more organized. (*to be*)
- 2 If I had more money, I _____ a laptop. (*to buy*)
- 3 Those children _____ so horrible if their parents were stricter. (*to be*)
- 4 I wouldn't go out with him even if you _____ me. (*to pay*)
- 5 If she didn't take so long in the shower, she _____ more time for breakfast. (*to have*)
- 6 If we _____ so hard, we wouldn't be so tired all the time. (*to work*)
- 7 If you _____ so much beer, you wouldn't be so fat. (*to drink*)
- 8 The world _____ a better place if politicians were less corrupt. (*to be*)
- 9 I _____ to visit Thailand if I had the chance. (*to love*)
- 10 If I had more free time, I _____ a book. (*to write*)
- 11 If you _____ a smartphone, you could send me photos easily. (*to have*)
- 12 I _____ that if I were you. It's bad luck! (*to do*)

Exercise 6. (verbal) What would you do

- 1) if your grandson or granddaughter washed your laptop in water?
- 2) if you saw someone get murdered in the street?
- 3) if you saw someone steal something from a shop?
- 4) if you lost your cell phone?
- 5) if you swallowed a spider?
- 6) if you couldn't remember where you parked your car in a big car park?
- 7) if you found one thousand dollars in the street?
- 8) if your car broke down on a highway at night?
- 9) if somebody entered the line in front of you, in a restaurant?

More exercises: <https://www.englishpage.com/conditional/conditional2.htm>