

# English Grammar – Mixed Conditionals

Here is a reminder of the 4 conditionals in English:

**The zero conditional** talks about facts and things that are generally true.

*(Present Simple + Present Simple)*

*(Present Condition → Present Result)*

Example: If you study, you learn.

**The first conditional** talks about a possible future for somebody.

*(Present Simple + Future Simple)*

*(Present Condition → Future Result)*

Example: John - if you study hard, you will pass the test on Monday.

John - if you study hard, you might pass the test on Monday.

**The second conditional** talks about a hypothetical present.

*(Past Simple + Conditional Present)*

*(Present Condition → Present or Future Result)*

Example: If John studied more, he would learn faster.

If John studied more, he could learn faster.

**The third conditional** talks about a hypothetical past event.

*(Past Perfect + Conditional Perfect)*

*(Past Condition → Past Result)*

Example: If John had studied more, he would have passed the test.

If John had studied more, he might have passed the test.

Real

Imaginary

Since the second and third conditionals talk about imaginary situations, in the present and in the past, we can mix them to create new imaginary situations. We can mix the condition clause of the second conditional with the result clause of the third conditional (present condition → past result), and vice versa (past condition → present result). Here are some examples:

Condition clause of second conditional + result clause of third conditional:

(present condition → past result)

- If I had more money, I would have gone to France.
- If I were you, I would have gone to the party.
- If she wasn't afraid of flying she would have traveled by plane.
- If my Italian was better, I could have translated the letter.
- If I was a good cook, I'd have invited them to lunch.

Condition clause of third conditional + result clause of second conditional:

(past condition → present result)

- If I had studied harder at school, I would have a better job now.
- If I had been hired, I would be in England today.
- If he had started the job earlier, he would be finished already.
- If you had arrived earlier, you could be eating pizza too, but it's finished. Sorry!
- If they hadn't bought an electric car, they wouldn't have such a big electric bill.

Here are 5 ways that we can mix (or adapt) the second and third conditionals:

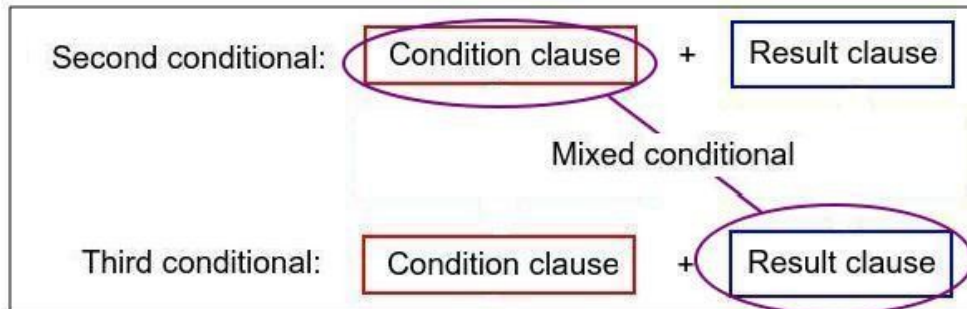
## 1. Present Condition → Past Result

We can mix the condition clause of the **Second Conditional** (hypothetical present) with the result clause of the **Third Conditional** (probable past) to talk about an imaginary present situation and its probable result in the past. For example:

Second conditional: If you **were** fluent in English, you **would understand** the joke.

Third conditional: If you **had been** fluent in English, you **would have understood** the joke.

Mixed conditional: If you **were** fluent in English, you **would have understood** the joke.



More examples:

- If he **lived** in California, he **would have felt** the earthquake.
- If we **spoke** English, we **wouldn't have needed** a translator.
- If they **offered** installation service, I **wouldn't have installed** it myself.

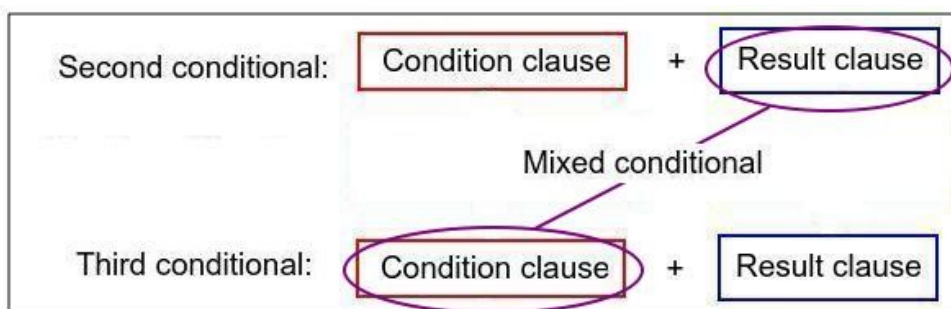
## 2. Past Condition → Present Result

We can mix the condition clause of the **Third Conditional** (hypothetical past) with the result clause of the **Second Conditional** (probable present) to talk about an imaginary past event and its probable result in the present. For example:

Third conditional: If I **had invested** in Bitcoin, I **would have been** rich.

Second conditional: If I **invested** in Bitcoin, I **would be** rich.

Mixed conditional: If I **had invested** in Bitcoin, I **would be** rich.



More examples:

- If we **had taken** that flight, we **would be** dead.
- If he **had passed** the test first time, he **wouldn't need** to pay for a second test.
- If they **had bought** more food, they **wouldn't be** hungry.

**Suggested video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6bnDXzKnzY> (4 mins)

### Exercise 1. Present Condition → Past Result.

Complete the sentences using the given verbs to create mixed conditionals.

1. If my family \_\_\_\_\_ (be) rich, I \_\_\_\_\_ (study) medicine.
2. If we \_\_\_\_\_ (live) in Thailand, we \_\_\_\_\_ (die) in the tsunami.
3. If you \_\_\_\_\_ (speak) French, I \_\_\_\_\_ (ask) you to be my interpreter.

### Exercise 2. Past Condition → Present Result.

Complete the sentences using the given verbs to create mixed conditionals.

1. If I \_\_\_\_\_ (study) medicine, I \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a doctor now.
2. If we \_\_\_\_\_ (not fly) on that day, we \_\_\_\_\_ (be) stuck in Ukraine.
3. If you \_\_\_\_\_ (learn) French instead of German, you \_\_\_\_\_ (be able to) get us out of this crazy situation!

### 3. Past Condition → Future Result

We can mix the condition clause of the **Third Conditional** (hypothetical past) with an adaptation of the result clause of the **Second Conditional** (to create a probable future) to talk about an imaginary past event and its probable result in the future. For example:

Third conditional:            If I **had been hired**, I **would have moved** to England last week.

Second conditional:        If I **were hired**, I **would move** to England.

Mixed conditional:        If I **had been hired**, I **would be moving** to England next week.  
(we use the conditional future continuous)

More examples:

- If she **had signed up** for the ski trip, she **would be joining** us tomorrow.
- If Nicole **hadn't encouraged** me, I **wouldn't be changing** jobs next week.
- If she **hadn't missed** her flight, she **would be speaking** at the event this evening.

### Exercise 3. Past Condition → Future Result.

Complete the sentences using the given verbs to create mixed conditionals.

1. If I \_\_\_\_\_ (be) lazy in school, I \_\_\_\_\_ (not graduate) from university next year.
2. If he \_\_\_\_\_ (tell) me about the fast-track option, I \_\_\_\_\_ (complete) the course at the end of the year.
3. If she \_\_\_\_\_ (catch) the previous flight, she \_\_\_\_\_ (arrive) in one hour.

## 4. Future Condition → Past Result

We can mix an adaptation of the condition clause of the **Second Conditional** (hypothetical future) with the result clause of the **Third Conditional** (probable past) to talk about an imaginary future situation and its probable result in the past. For example:

Second conditional:        If his parents **didn't visit** him, he **would come** with us.

Third conditional:        If his parents **hadn't visited** him last weekend, he **would have come** with us.

Mixed conditional:        If his parents **weren't visiting** him next weekend, he **would have come** with us.  
(we use the past continuous instead of the past simple)

More examples:

- If I **weren't going** to work tomorrow, I **would have traveled** to New York with you.
- If I **weren't playing** football next Saturday, I **would have run** the marathon yesterday.
- If I **weren't traveling** to Europe next week, I **would have accepted** the job.
- If I **weren't going** to the wedding tonight, I **would have gone** to the beach this morning.

### Exercise 4. Future Condition → Past Result.

Complete the sentences using the given verbs to create mixed conditionals.

1. If I \_\_\_\_\_ (*not go*) on a work trip next week, I \_\_\_\_\_ (*accept*) that new assignment.
2. If they \_\_\_\_\_ (*fly*) tomorrow night, they \_\_\_\_\_ (*not drink*) so much yesterday.
3. If I \_\_\_\_\_ (*have*) an operation early tomorrow morning, I \_\_\_\_\_ (*sleep*) longer last night.

## 5. Future Condition → Present Result

We can mix an adaptation of the condition clause of the **Second Conditional** (hypothetical future) with the standard result clause of the **Second Conditional** (probable present) to talk about an imaginary future event and its probable result in the present. For example:

Second conditional (standard): If I **were** at the concert, I **would be** very excited.

Second conditional (adapted): If I **were going** to the concert tonight, I **would be** very excited.  
(we use the past continuous instead of the past simple)

More examples:

- If Joseph **were giving** a speech tomorrow, he **would be** very nervous.
- If I **were doing** a test next Monday, I **would study** for it now.
- If **there were to be** a lottery draw tomorrow, I **would buy** a ticket today.  
(note that "there were being" is not used)

### Exercise 5. Future Condition → Present Result.

Complete the sentences using the given verbs to create mixed conditionals.

1. If Martin \_\_\_\_\_ (*travel*) tomorrow, he \_\_\_\_\_ (*be*) asleep right now.
2. If you \_\_\_\_\_ (*have*) a party at the weekend, I \_\_\_\_\_ (*buy*) beer today.
3. If the war \_\_\_\_\_ (*end*) tomorrow, I \_\_\_\_\_ (*pack*) my bags already.

It's also possible to make mixed conditionals using the zero and first conditional structures, but they are considered informal and are rarely used.

**Suggested video:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K\\_XikoZwM3M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_XikoZwM3M) (22 mins)