



PROD.

Second conditional

SCENE:

Repetition theory of the second conditional

DATE:

19-05-2023



FORM

- Subordinate clause: **if/unless** + **PAST form**
- Main clause: **would / could / might** + **INFINITIVE**
 - Short form: 'd / wouldn't / couldn't

E.g.:

- *They **would be** grateful **if** you **helped** them out.*
- ***If** I **didn't** trust you, I **wouldn't lend** you this amount of money.*
- *I **would** never **give** money to a person, **unless** I **trusted** them completely.*



MEANING

FIRST POSSIBILITY

To express that something might be possible in the present or the future.

SECOND POSSIBILITY

To express that something is or will be impossible.

MEANING: examples

FIRST POSSIBILITY

If we **knew** that the money was well spent, we **would be** willing to pay taxes more willingly.

└─→ *It might be possible in the present of the future.*

SECOND POSSIBILITY

I **would practise** some sport, **if** I **were** you.

└─→ *It is impossible → I am not you.*



NOTES

01 *FIRST NOTE*

DO NOT USE WOULD IN THE IF-CLAUSE UNLESS TO EXPRESS MODALITY.

02 *SECOND NOTE*

DO NOT USE SHOULD IN THE MAIN CLAUSE UNLESS TO EXPRESS MODALITY.

NOTES: examples

MODALITY:

If I **would** lend me some money, you would help me a lot.

The prisoners would be tortured if they **wouldn't** speak. (= if they refused to speak)

If anything went wrong, we **should** react immediately.

PURE CONDITION:

If I ever **won** some money in the lottery, I would travel around the world.

→ NOT: If I ever **would** win...



NOTES

03 *THIRD NOTE*

Were is normally used instead of **was** to express that the condition is not fulfilled.

*E.g.: If I **were** the Prime Minister, I would do something about the unemployment figures.*

04 *FOURTH NOTE*

Formal English: **should** can be used in the conditional clause or replace **if**. → expresses an unlikely condition.

*E.g.: If anything **should** see us here, we might be in big trouble.
E.g.: **Should** anything unusual **happen**, we would have to inform the manager.*