

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES TYPE 2

A- FORM: The verb in the if-clause is in the past tense; the verb in the main clause is in the conditional tense:

If I had a map I would lend it to you.

B USE: Type 2 is used for improbable situations or actions that we don't expect to take place :

If I lived near my office I'd be in time for work. (But I don't live near my office.)

If I were you I'd plant some trees round the house. (But I am not you.)

If a burglar came into my room at night I'd scream. (But I don't expect a burglar to come in.)

If I dyed my hair blue everyone would laugh at me. (But I don't intend to dye it.)

If he left his bicycle outside someone would steal it.

► **if he/she/it were** can be used instead of **if he/she/it was**, and is considered the more correct form:

If he were to resign . . . = If he resigned . . .

If I were to succeed . . . = If I succeeded . . .

This construction with **were** is chiefly found in fairly formal sentences.

► Suggestion in type 2 is a little more polite than a suggestion in type 1, just as **would you** is a more polite request form than **will you**.

1 VARIATIONS OF THE MAIN CLAUSE :

(a) **might** or **could** may be used instead of **would**:

If you tried again you would succeed. (certain result)

If you tried again you might succeed. (possible result)

If I knew her number I could ring her up. (ability)

If he had a permit he could get a Job. (ability or permission)

(b) The continuous conditional form may be used instead of the simple conditional form:

Peter is on holiday; he is touring Italy. ~ If I were on holiday I would/might be touring Italy too.

(c) **if + past tense** can be followed by another past tense when we wish to express automatic or habitual reactions in the past: *If anyone interrupted him he got angry, (whenever anyone interrupted him)*

2 VARIATIONS OF THE IF-CLAUSE : Instead of **if + simple past** we can have:

(a) **if + past continuous** : *If my car was working I would/could drive you to the station.*

(b) **if + past perfect** : *If he had taken my advice he would be a rich man now.*

Exercise 1 : Put the verbs in into the correct tenses.

1 If I had a typewriter I (type) it myself.

2 If I (know) his address I'd give it to you.

3 He (look) a lot better if he shaved more often.

4 If you (play) for lower stakes you wouldn't lose so much.

5 If he worked more slowly he (not make) so many mistakes.

6 I shouldn't drink that wine if I (be) you.

7 If I were sent to prison you (visit) me?

8 If someone (give) you a helicopter what would you do with it?

9 I (buy) shares in that company if I had some money.

10 If you drove your car into the river you (be able) to get out?

11 If you (not belong) to a union you couldn't get a job.

12 If I (win) a big prize in a lottery I'd give up my job.

13 What you (do) if you found a burglar in your house?

14 I could tell you what this means if I (know) Greek.

15 If everybody (give) £1 we would have enough.

16 He might get fat if he (stop) smoking.

17 If he knew that it was dangerous he (not come).

18 If you (see) someone drowning what would you do?

Exercise 2 : Put the verbs into the correct form.

- 1 Of course I'm not going to give her a diamond ring. If I (give) her a diamond ring she (sell) it.
- 2 Tom: I woke up to find the room full of smoke; but I knew exactly what to do. Ann: If I (wake) up to find the room full of smoke I (have) no idea what to do.
- 3 Husband: But I'm not going on a diet. Why should I go on a diet? Wife: If you (go) on a diet you (lose) weight.
- 4 If someone (say), I'll give you £500 to go into court and swear that this statement is true, what you (do)?
- 5 If we (work) all night we (finish) in time; but we have no intention of working all night.

Exercise 3 : Rewrite these sentences, using an if construction.

He smokes too much; perhaps that's why he can't get rid of his cough.

If he didn't smoke so much he might get rid of his cough or

If he smoked less he might (be able to) get rid of his cough.

- 1 She is very shy; that's why she doesn't enjoy parties.
- 2 He doesn't take any exercise; that's why he is so unhealthy.
- 3 I haven't the right change so we can't get tickets from the machine.
- 4 They speak French to her, not English, so her English doesn't improve.
- 5 He doesn't work overtime, so he doesn't earn as much as I do.
- 6 My number isn't in the directory so people don't ring me up.
- 7 The police are not armed so we don't have gun battles in the streets.
- 8 The shops don't deliver now, which makes life difficult.

Exercise 4 : Complete the Conditional Sentences Type II.

1. If you (lose) your wallet, what (you do) ?
2. The soup (taste) better if it (have) more salt in it.
3. If there (be) a little more wind, we (go) sailing.
4. I (buy) a Rolls Royce if I (be) rich enough.
5. If it (snow) in the Sahara Desert, everyone (wonder) what was happening.
6. You (not look) so tired if you (not work) so hard.
7. Life (be) easy if no one (be) selfish.
8. If I (have) a day off tomorrow, I (go) to the beach.
9. If I (be) you, I (get) a new job.
10. If he (be) younger, he (travel) more.
11. If we (not / be) friends, I (be) angry with you.
12. If I (have) enough money, I (buy) a big house.
13. If she (not / be) always so late, she (be) promoted.
14. If we (win) the lottery, we (travel) the world.
15. If you (have) a better job, we (be) able to buy a new car

- 6 You must never blow out a gas light. Do you know what (happen) if you (blow) out a gas light?
- 7 If I (see) a tiger walking across Hyde Park I (climb) a tree. ~ That (not be) any use. The tiger (climb) after you.
- 8 If I (come) across two men fighting with knives I (call) the police. ~ But this is a very peaceful area.
- 9 If someone (ring) my doorbell at 3 a.m. I (be) very unwilling to open the door.
- 10 If I (see) a python in Piccadilly I (assume) it had escaped from a circus.
- 10 Tom: The plane was on fire so we baled out. Ann: I don't think I (have) the nerve to do that even if the plane (be) on fire.

- 9 He's very thin; perhaps that's why he feels the cold so much.
- 10 We haven't any matches so we can't light a fire.
- 11 It's a pity we haven't a steak to cook over our camp fire.
- 12 I'm fat; that's why I can't get through the bathroom window.
- 13 He doesn't help me, possibly because I never ask him for help.
- 14 I can't drive so we can't take the car.
- 15 We have no ladder so we can't get over the wall.
- 16 My friend advised me to sell it. (*My friend said. If I . . . you I . . .*)
- 17 I haven't much time so I read very little.
- 18 They don't clean the windows so the rooms look rather dark.
- 19 He never polishes his shoes, so he never looks smart.
- 20 He doesn't pay his staff properly; perhaps that's why they don't work well.

Exercise 5 : Make a correct if clause sentence for each of the following items

1. If I were offered the job, I think I (take) it.
2. If she (be) hungry, she would eat something.
3. If he studied, he (pass) the exam.
4. I (send) you a postcard if I had your address.
5. What (happen) if you didn't go to work tomorrow?
6. If she has enough money, she (buy) a new car.
7. What will John do if he (not get) the job?
8. She would be terribly upset if I (lose) her ring.
9. Many people would be out of work if the factory (close) down.
10. What would you do if you (be) the president of your country?
11. If he hurried, he (catch) the train.
12. If he (have) time, he will come.
13. If he (ring) the bell, the waiter would come.
14. If I have some money, I (buy) a new car.
15. If I (work) harder, I will pass the exam.