

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES TYPE 3

A The verb in the if-clause is in the past perfect tense; the verb in the main clause is in the perfect conditional. The time is past and the condition cannot be fulfilled because the action in the if-clause didn't happen.

If I had known that you were coming I would have met you at the airport. (But I didn't know, so I didn't come.)

If he had tried to leave the country he would have been stopped at the frontier. (But he didn't try.)

B POSSIBLE VARIATIONS OF THE BASIC FORM

1 could or might may be used instead of would:

If we had found him earlier we could have saved his life. (ability)

If we had found him earlier we might have saved his life. (possibility)

If our documents had been in order we could have left at once. (ability or permission)

2 We can use the past perfect continuous in the if-clause:

I was wearing a seat belt. If I hadn't been wearing one I'd have been seriously injured.

3 A combination of types 2 and 3 is possible:

The plane I intended to catch crashed and everyone was killed. If I had caught that plane I would be dead now or I would have been killed.

If I had worked harder at school I would be sitting in a comfortable office now; I wouldn't be sweeping the streets. (But I didn't work hard at school and now I am sweeping the streets.)

4 had can be placed first and the if omitted:

If you had obeyed orders this disaster would not have happened = Had you obeyed orders this disaster would not have happened.

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

- 1 If I had known that you were in hospital I (visit) you.
- 2 The ground was very soft. But for that, my horse (win).
- 3 If you (arrive) ten minutes earlier you would have got a seat.
- 4 You would have seen my garden at its best if you (be) here last week.
- 5 But for his quickness I (be) killed.
- 6 I shouldn't have believed it if I (not see) it with my own eyes.
- 7 If he had slipped he (fall) 500 metres.
- 8 If he had asked you, you (accept)?
- 9 If I (had) a map I would have been all right.
- 10 If I (know) that you were coming I'd have baked a cake.
- 11 I (offer) to help him if I had realized that he was ill.
- 12 If you had left that wasp alone it (not sting) you.
- 13 If I (realize) what a bad driver you were I wouldn't have come with you.
- 14 If I had realized that the traffic lights were red I (stop).
- 15 But for the fog we (reach) our destination ages ago.
- 16 If you had told me that he never paid his debts I (not lend) him the money.
- 17 If you (not sneeze) he wouldn't have known that we were there.
- 18 If you (put) some mustard in the sandwiches they would have tasted better.
- 19 The hens (not get) into the house if you had shut the door.
- 20 If he had known that the river was dangerous he (not try) to swim across it.

Exercise 2 : Rewrite the following sentences using conditional type 3

1. Lucia didn't go to school last Monday because she was ill.
If Lucia.....
2. I didn't cook dinner yesterday evening because my husband brought pizza.
If my husband
3. My father wasn't at home last night because he had an important meeting at the office.
If my father.....
4. Peter went out with his friends because he finished his homework on time.
If Peter.....
5. We were late for work yesterday morning so the boss was very angry with us.
If we.....
6. David and Claire didn't buy the house on Park Street because it didn't have a balcony.
If the house on Park Street.....
7. I couldn't get into the house because I forgot the key in the classroom.
If I.....
8. Mr.Jerkins drove his car carelessly.He crashed into a tree.
If Mr.Jerkins.....
9. Miss Eliot left her umbrella at home so she got soaked in the heavy rain last Sunday.
If Miss Eliot.....
10. Little boy refused to use the suncream.He had terrible sunburn on his shoulders.
If the little boy.....

Exercise 3 : Rewrite these sentences using an if construction.

You didn't tell me we had run out of bread, so I didn't buy any.

If you had told me we had run out of bread I'd have bought some.

- 1 I didn't see the signal, so I didn't stop.
- 2 I didn't know your number, so I didn't ring.
- 3 She didn't know you were in hospital, so she didn't visit you.
- 4 We only came by bus because there were no taxis.
- 5 She didn't speak to him, possibly because she was so shy.
- 6 She threatened to set fire to her flat; that's the only reason I asked her to leave.
- 7 We didn't visit the museum because we hadn't time.
- 8 I only came up the stairs because the lift wasn't working.
- 9 We didn't listen carefully; perhaps that's why we made this mistake.

Exercise 4 : Complete the following sentences using the correct form of the verbs provided.

1. Kevin caught the bus on time, but if he (miss) the bus, he (be) late for his appointment.
2. Bob didn't write to me when he was on vacation, but if he (know) my address, he (send) me a postcard.
3. We didn't buy the car because it was too expensive, but if it (be) a little cheaper, we (buy) it.
4. They didn't go to her party, but if she (invite) them, they (go).
5. I didn't know that Dave was in the hospital last week. If I (know), I (visit) him.

Exercise 5 : Match the following sentences

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. I would have said hello | A. if I hadn't looked at my calendar. |
| 2. I would have mailed the letter | B. if the roads hadn't been so slippery. |
| 3. If I had seen the accident, | C. if I had known the baby was sleeping. |
| 4. If I had planned a trip to France, | D. if I had seen you. |
| 5. I would have forgotten your birthday | E. I would have gone swimming. |
| 6. The accident wouldn't have happened | F. if I had had some stamps. |
| 7. I would have cleaned my apartment | G. if I hadn't washed it in hot water. |
| 8. If I had brought my bathing suit, | H. I would have tried to learn some French. |
| 9. My sweater wouldn't have shrunk | I. if I had known they were coming. |
| 10. I would have been much quieter | J. I would have called an ambulance |

Exercise 6 : Complete the following sentences using your own words.

1. I would have lent you some money if _____
2. The boss would have fired her if _____
3. If I had known it was going to rain, _____
4. If she hadn't missed so many classes, _____

- 10 We got a lift, so we reached the station in time.
- 11 You washed it in boiling water; that's why it shrank.
- 12 We missed the train because we were using an out-of-date timetable.
- 13 His own men deserted him; that's the only reason why he failed.
- 14 They were driving very quickly. That's why the accident was so terrible.
- 15 It was raining. That's the only reason I didn't take the children to the beach.
- 16 Tom's father was on the Board. That's the only reason he got the job.
- 17 He wasn't looking where he was going. That's why he was run over.
- 18 I don't like country life, perhaps because I wasn't brought up in the country.
- 19 I didn't know he was so quarrelsome. I'm sorry now that I invited him.
- 20 It rained all the time. Perhaps that's why he didn't enjoy his visit.

6. It was cold yesterday, but if it (be) warmer, we (go) to the beach.
7. I felt a little sick last night. If I (feel) better, I (go) to the movie with you.
8. Jane didn't understand the homework. If she (listen) to the teacher's instructions, she (know) what to do.
9. I'm sorry I was late. I forgot to set my alarm clock last night. If the alarm clock (ring), I (get) to the meeting on time.
10. The hockey tickets were all sold out. If there (be) a ticket available, I (go) to the game.
11. Our team lost the football game last night, but if George (play), we probably (win).

5. If yesterday had been a holiday, _____
6. I wouldn't have missed the bus if _____
7. I would have had a party if _____
8. I would have called you if _____