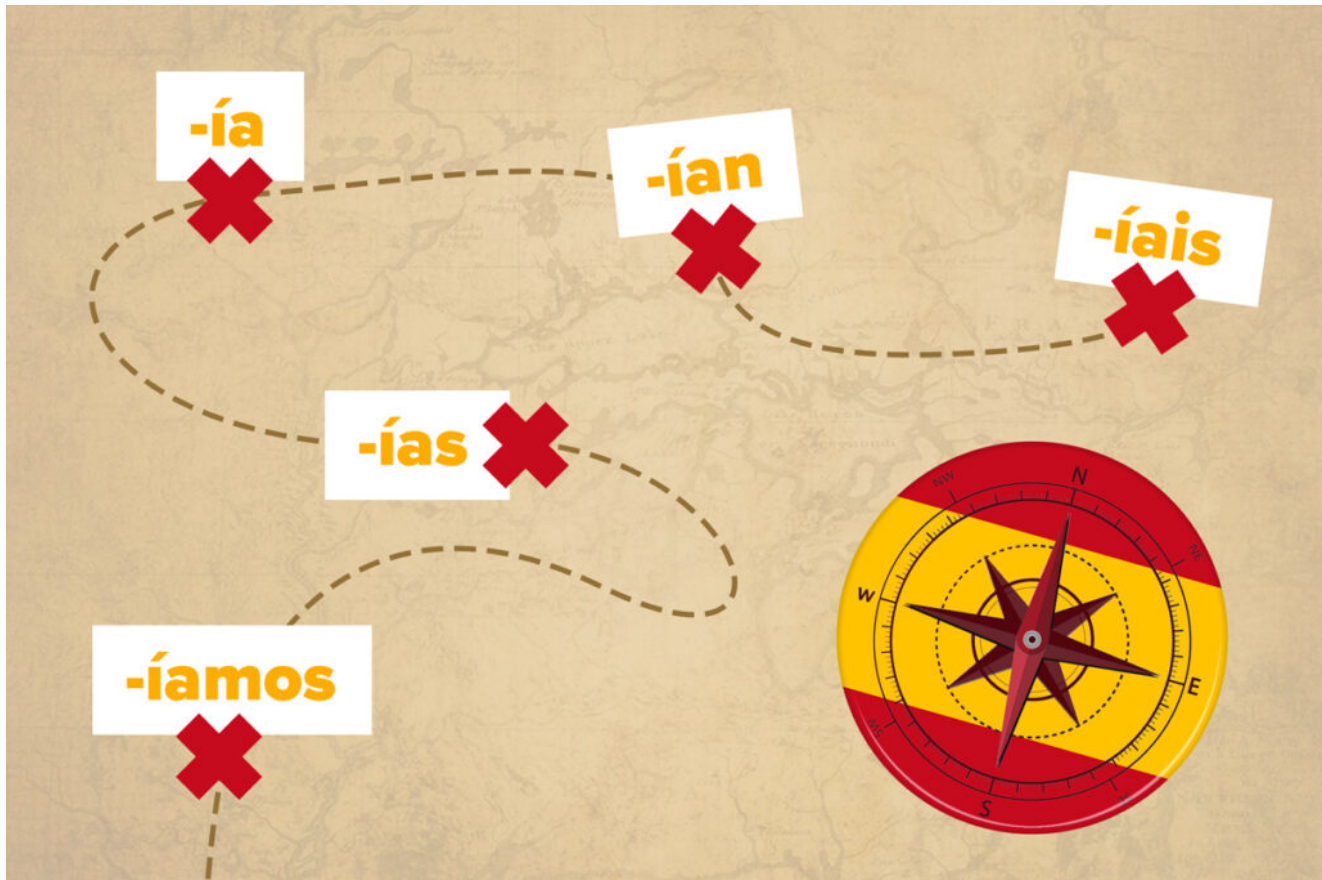


Your Complete Guide to the Spanish Conditional Tense: When and How to Use It

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How much time do you spend talking about things that could have happened?

Or things that could still happen in the future?

And how do we talk about them?

Whether it's in English or Spanish, we use the conditional tense.

This post will show you how to use the Spanish conditional and give you the confidence to talk about all possibilities!

Contents

What is the Spanish Conditional Tense?

Spanish conditionals are used to talk about hypothetical things—things that could be or could have been.

Compared to other Spanish tenses, it's very easy to learn.

To conjugate any verb into the conditional tense, **add the endings -ía, -ías, -ía, -íamos, -íais or -ían to the end of the infinitive form of the verb.**

For example:

*Si tuviera un millón de dólares, **dejaría** de trabajar.* (If I had a million dollars, I would quit working.)

*Él me dijo que **se casaría** conmigo.* (He told me he would marry me.)

Conditionals are divided into four categories, **zero, first, second and third conditionals.**

There are also two conditional tenses in Spanish: the **simple conditional** and the **conditional perfect.**

Let's look at how these two forms differ and how we actually use them.

The Simple Conditional in Spanish

The simple conditional is what most people mean when they say the “conditional” tense.

This tense typically applies to things that could happen now or in the future. For example:

***Viajaría** a Japón.* (I would travel to Japan.)

*¿**Podrías** ayudarme?* (Could you help me?)

There are two things for you to bear in mind when conjugating the conditional tense:

1. All three verb types (-ar/-er/-ir) have the same endings
2. You add the endings to the infinitive

Regular Verbs in the Conditional Tense

Pronoun	Conjugation	Example Using <i>Comer</i>
<i>Yo</i>	<i>-ía</i>	<i>Comería</i>
<i>Tú</i>	<i>-ías</i>	<i>Comerías</i>
<i>Él/Ella/Usted</i>	<i>-ía</i>	<i>Comería</i>
<i>Nosotros</i>	<i>-íamos</i>	<i>Comeríamos</i>
<i>Vosotros</i>	<i>-íais</i>	<i>Comeríais</i>
<i>Ellos/Ellas/Ustedes</i>	<i>-ían</i>	<i>Comerían</i>

Note that all of the endings added to the infinitive are the same.

Irregular Verbs in the Conditional Tense

The list of irregular verbs is very short, and they're verbs we use every day.

So the best solution is to learn their irregularities by heart.

It's just the stem that slightly changes, so rather than using the infinitive, you'll use the bolded stems listed below and add the same endings that you add to the regular verbs:

Infinitive Verb	Conditional Stem
<i>Salir</i> (to leave/go out)	<i>Saldr-</i>
<i>Tener</i> (to have)	<i>Tendr-</i>
<i>Valer</i> (to cost/be worth)	<i>Valdr-</i>
<i>Querer</i> (to want/love)	<i>Querr-</i>
<i>Decir</i> (to say/tell)	<i>Dir-</i>
<i>Hacer</i> (to make/do)	<i>Har-</i>
<i>Poner</i> (to put/place)	<i>Pondr-</i>
<i>Venir</i> (to come)	<i>Vendr-</i>
<i>Caber</i> (to fit)	<i>Cabr-</i>
<i>Haber</i> (to have)	<i>Habr-</i>
<i>Saber</i> (to know)	<i>Sabr-</i>

Uses of the Simple Conditional Tense

1. To express future in the past.

*Me dijo que **se casaría** conmigo.*
(He told me he would marry me).

*Le dije que eso me **haría** muy feliz.*
(I told him that would make me very happy).

2. To speculate about the past.

***Se casarían** a las 4 de la tarde.*
(They must have gotten married at 4 p.m.)

*Esa **sería** la razón por la que se enamoró de ella.*
(That must have been the reason he fell in love with her.)

3. To express softening or deference (usually with requests).

***Me gustaría** hacer un pedido.*
(I'd like to place an order.)

***Me encantaría** pasar un fin de semana romántico en Barcelona.*
(I would love to spend a romantic weekend in Barcelona.)

4. To indicate a present or future hypothesis, or what would happen if there weren't any obstacles at the moment of speaking.

***Me casaría** contigo, pero antes debo ahorrar.*
(I would marry you, but I have to save some money first.)

***Viajaríamos** a París, pero no podemos.*
(We would travel to Paris but we can't.)

5. To talk about events which might or might not occur.

***Sería** romántico casarse en Madrid.*
(It would be romantic to get married in Madrid.)

*Ser tu esposa **sería** maravilloso.*
(Being your wife would be wonderful.)

6. To ask for advice.

*¿Qué **harías** si te dejara?*
(What would you do if he left you?)

*¿Qué vestido **comprarías** para la boda?*
(Which dress would you buy for the wedding?)

7. To talk about what would be done in a specific situation.

*¿Te **casarías** con él?*
(Would you marry him?)

*¿Le **dirías** la verdad sobre tu pasado?*
(Would you tell him the truth about your past?)

8. To talk about things that probably won't happen.

We use the simple conditional along with the imperfect subjunctive to form the second conditional, which we will discuss later in this post.

*Si me lo pidiera, **me casaría** con él.*
(If he asked me, I would marry him.)

*Si pudiera, le **diría** la verdad sobre mi pasado.*
(If I could, I would tell him the truth about my past.)

As you can see, the simple conditional tense has many uses—perhaps even more than some other tenses! To get familiar with them, you need to use them with native speakers and consume natural Spanish content.

You can do this with an immersion program like [FluentU](#), which lets you watch hundreds of authentic Spanish videos like movie trailers, news reports and inspiring talks. They all come with interactive subtitles, which makes it easier to learn about words you don't know—and spot instances of the Spanish conditional in context.

The Conditional Perfect in Spanish

The conditional perfect is used to say “would have...”.

The conditional perfect is formed by the **simple conditional of the verb *haber*** and the **past participle of the main verb**.

Here's the irregular verb ***haber*** fully conjugated in the simple conditional:

Subject Pronoun *Haber* Conditional Conjugation

<i>Yo</i>	<i>Habría</i>
<i>Tú</i>	<i>Habrías</i>
<i>Él/ella/usted</i>	<i>Habría</i>
<i>Nosotros/nosotras</i>	<i>Habríamos</i>
<i>Vosotros/vosotras</i>	<i>Habríais</i>
<i>Ellos/ellas/ustedes</i>	<i>Habrían</i>

Then you'll need the past participle. This is formed by taking the stem of the verb and adding *-ado* for *-ar* verbs and adding *-ido* for *-er* and *-ir* verbs.

For example, *amar* ("to love," infinitive form) becomes *amado* ("loved," past participle).

Here are some examples of the conditional perfect:

Habría llegado en Chile a las 8 si mi vuelo no retrasó. (I would have arrived in Chile at 8 if my flight wasn't delayed.)

Ellos ***habrían venido*** con nosotros, pero su mamá no los permitió. (They would have come with us, but their mom wouldn't let them.)

Uses of the Conditional Perfect Tense

When it comes to the uses of the conditional perfect, everything becomes much easier, because we only use it in two situations:

1. To express supposition or the probability of a past situation that has already taken place.

Habría estado muy nervioso cuando le pidió matrimonio.
(He must have been very nervous when he asked her to marry him.)

Seguramente ***habrían perdido*** el avión a París.
(They had probably missed the plane to Paris.)

2. To talk about actions that would have happened but didn't.

In most cases, this use is directly related to the third conditional, which will be covered more later.

*Si hubiéramos tenido dinero, **nos habríamos casado** el año pasado.*
(If we had had money, we would have gotten married last year.)

*Si no te hubiera querido, no **me habría casado** contigo.*
(If I hadn't loved you, I wouldn't have married you).

Types of Conditional

There are two clauses—or, parts—in a conditional sentence: the **if clause** and the **main clause**.

For example:

“**If** I had a lot of time, I **would learn** Spanish conditionals perfectly.”

If we translate this sentence into Spanish, we'll get a very similar sentence with two clauses:

***Si** tuviera mucho tiempo, **aprendería** los verbos condicionales en español perfectamente.*

Four different types of conditional sentences are based on this structure:

The Zero Conditional

This conditional is used to talk about always or usually true things.

For example:

Si sabes el presente, sabes el condicional cero (If you know the present tense, you know the zero conditional)

To make the zero conditional, you need **the simple present in the if clause, and simple present in the main clause**.

Si + [simple present], [simple present]

Forgotten how to form the present tense? [See this post for a recap](#).

The First Conditional

The first conditional is used when you want to talk about how something is possible or likely, assuming that a certain condition is met.

For example:

Si llueve mañana, no iré al banco. (If it rains tomorrow, I won't go to the bank).

No iré al banco si llueve mañana. (I won't go to the bank if it rains tomorrow.)

To form the first conditional, you will need the present tense for your if clause, and the future tense for your main clause:

Si + [present tense], [future tense]

[future tense] + si + [present tense]

Check out this post to brush up on your [future tense](#).

The Second Conditional

The second conditional is the tense you use when daydreaming about possibilities that probably won't happen in real life.

For example, if your friend asks you if you want to go traveling on a round-the-world vacation for a whole year, you might say,

Si tuviera la plata, iría contigo. (If I had the money, I'd go with you).

To make the second conditional, you need the imperfect subjunctive and the conditional tense.

Si + [imperfect subjunctive], [conditional]

See this guide on the [imperfect subjunctive](#) if you need a refresher.

The Third Conditional

The third conditional is used when you want to talk about a situation that did not happen in the past but has imaginary consequences.

An example would be:

Si hubiera sabido, te habría llamado. (If I had known, I would have called you).

To make the third conditional, take the imperfect subjunctive that we saw above, and turn it into the past perfect subjunctive:

Si + [past perfect subjunctive], [past perfect subjunctive]

The past perfect subjunctive is also called the pluperfect subjunctive—and [this post](#) will jog your memory on how to use it.

So that's it! You've got everything that you need to use the conditional tense in Spanish.

With this skill, you'll be talking about all hypotheticals, whether in the past, present, or future!