would have been = sarebbe stato

could have been = sarebbe potuto, poteva essere (stato)

Generally, they are used in past conditional (Condition III) sentences, which refer to past events that did not take place:

*If I had become King, I would have knighted you.* (...but I did not become King).

*If I had been a rich man's son, I could have bought myself a pony.* (...but I was not a rich man's son.)

You can learn more about this use by reading [url=<http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/410/grammar/3cond.htm> ]THIS[/url].

# **Third Conditional**

## Introduction

The **third conditional** (also called conditional type 3) is a structure used for talking about unreal situations in the past.

### Using the third conditional

The third conditional is used to talk about things which **did not happen** in the past. If your native language does not have a similar construction, you may find this a little strange, but it can be very useful. It is often used to express criticism or regret:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Example** | **Explanation** |
| If you had driven more carefully, you would not have had an accident. | **Criticism**: You had an accident because you didn't drive carefully enough. |
| If we had played a little better, we could have won the game. | **Regret**: We didn't play well, so we lost the game. |
| If you had saved your money, you could have bought a computer. | **Criticism**: You didn't save your money, so now you can't afford a computer. |
| If it had snowed, we could have gone skiing. | **Regret**: It didn't snow, so we couldn't go skiing. |