

GRAMMAR

Using the second conditional

LEVEL

Intermediate (B1)

NUMBER

EN_B1_1072G

LANGUAGE

English



Learning outcomes

- I can recognise and use the second conditional to describe a hypothetical situation.
- I can talk about what I would do in different situations.



Warm up

1. **Think of** one thing you'd like to happen in the future but **isn't likely to happen**.
2. **Tell** the class about your idea. **Explain** why it isn't likely to happen.





Reading

Read the dialogue and **answer** the questions below.

Sarah: Hey! Long time no see. How are you?

Jessica: I know, it's been ages. Can't complain, really. This weather is awful, though. If it wasn't so wet, I'd suggest a walk along the canal.

Sarah: Maybe next time. I'm happy to chill. I love your new apartment! This area's great, too. I passed some lovely boutiques and bakeries on my way here. If I had more time, I'd be here every other weekend.

Jessica: I take it you're as busy as ever?

Sarah: Yeah, I am. You know how it is...



1. Where are Sarah and Jessica right now?
2. Why are they not going down to the canal?



Reading

Read the dialogue and **answer** the questions below.

Jessica: Well, actually – I've made quite a few changes since moving here. I was exhausted, so I took some time off work and now I've decided to become a yoga teacher. I'm going to India next month to do a course.

Sarah: Sounds amazing! Lucky you. If I didn't have kids and a mortgage, I'd give up my job and backpack around the world. That's definitely what I'd do if I won the lottery.

Jessica: There are small things you can do now to make it happen – you don't have to win the lottery. If I were you, I'd put some money aside every month... And when the kids are old enough –

Sarah: You try saving when you have teenagers who want the latest version of everything!



3. What is Jessica planning to do next month?
4. Why does Sarah say it's difficult for her to save money?



Hey! Long time no see.

I know! It's been ages.

Do Jessica and Sarah see each other regularly or not? How do you know?

”

We **put** some money **aside**
each month for our son to
go to university.



Why is it a good idea to **put** money **aside**
regularly?

Examining the second conditional

Read the sentences below and **answer** the questions in the blue box.

Sarah would save lots of money if she put some aside every month.

If it wasn't so wet outside, I'd suggest a walk along the canal.

- These two examples show the **second conditional**.
- Look at the clause beginning with *if*:
 - Is Sarah putting money aside every month or not?
 - Is it wet outside today or not?

- We use the second conditional to talk about an **unreal** or **hypothetical situation** and its **probable result**.
- **If clause** > we describe an unreal or hypothetical situation (in blue)
- **Result clause** > we say what we think would be the result of that situation.

Forming the second conditional

Read some more examples of the second conditional and **complete** the rules below.

If I had more time, **I'd be** here every other weekend.

If I didn't have kids and a mortgage, **I'd give up** my job and **backpack** around the world.

- Look at the verbs in the **if-clause**. What tense is it in?

If clause: _____ simple

- Look at the verbs in the result clause. What modal verb is used?

Result clause: _____ + bare infinitive

- We can also **change the order** of the clauses. If so, we **remove the comma**:

I'd be here every other weekend if I had more time.

I'd give up my job and backpack around the world if I didn't have kids and a mortgage.



If it **wasn't** so wet
outside....

If it **weren't** so wet
outside...

In the *if-clause*, there are **two forms** of the verb **to be** in the **1st** and **3rd** **person singular**. Which do you think is more common these days?



Pronunciation practice

Practise pronouncing **would**. Pay attention to the pronunciation of **would** in contracted form.

1

How would
you feel if...?

/haʊ wʊd/

2

How'd you
feel if...?

/haʊd/

3

I'd want...

/aɪd/

4

She'd go...

/ʃi:d/

5

You'd tell...

/ju:d/



Multiple choice

1 If I _____ more time, I'd learn a new language.

a. have

b. had

c. has

d. 's

2 How _____ you feel if you locked your phone and keys in the car?

a. could

b. do

c. would

d. make

3 I _____ love to go to the natural history museum if it was open!

a. 'd

b. 've

c. 'll

d. 'm



Form a second conditional sentence

Use the verbs provided. Note: you may have to use a negative or question form.

- 1 If I _____ (live) in Paris, I _____ (try) the most amazing food.
- 2 If it _____ (be) hotter outside, I _____ (suggest) a walk. But it's freezing today!
- 3 I _____ (not mind) living abroad if I _____ (can) visit my family once or twice a year.
- 4 What _____ (do) if you _____ (find) lots of cash sticking out of a cash machine?
- 5 _____ (travel) the world if you _____ (win) the lottery?



Discuss

1. **Read** through the questions below. **Note down** some answers for each.
2. **Interview** another member of your class in breakout rooms.
3. **Share** one interesting fact about your partner from the interview.



If you could invite anyone from history to a dinner party, who would you choose?

If you had endless free time, what would you spend it doing?

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?

If you had to listen to one song on repeat for the rest of your life, what would you choose?



Giving advice



One of my colleagues is still refusing to help me at work. What should I do about it?



If I were you, I'd talk to your manager about it. It doesn't seem to be getting any better!

- Which phrase do we use to **give advice** using the second conditional?
- What advice would you give the man above?



What would you do?

Read each of the situations below. **Give advice** to each person using the second conditional.

If I were you, I'd...

Julie's flatmate is extremely messy and is always late paying his rent.

Hassan's manager keeps giving him very tight deadlines at work.

Shaun wants to buy a house but he's terrible at saving money.

Mark forgot his wife's 40th birthday and now she is really angry with him.



End of the lesson

Idiom

Be careful what you wish for

Meaning: Sometimes something you want to happen (especially something bad) actually happens.



Additional practice



Vocabulary review

Review the vocabulary from today's the lesson. Which words or phrases were new for you?



Long time no see

to put money aside

It's been ages

mortgage

Can't complain!

to backpack

I take it...

to win the lottery

You know how it is

Lucky you!



Discuss

Read the statements. Are these things **likely** or **unlikely** to happen to you in the future?



I'm going to be famous.

I'm going to buy a house.

I'm going to be 20 centimetres taller.

I'm going to speak 10 languages.



Multiple choice



1 If I _____ a mortgage, I'd buy a boat and sail around the world.

a. don't want

b. doesn't have

c. weren't

d. didn't have

2 How would you react if someone _____ your purse on the street?

a. stolen

b. stealed

c. take

d. stole

3 She _____ living abroad if she could travel home once in a while.

a. don't mind

b. doesn't mind

c. won't mind

d. wouldn't mind



Fill in the gaps

Form a second conditional sentence. Note: you may have to use a negative or question form.

- 1 If _____ a stack of cash sticking out of a cash machine, would you take it?
- 2 How many episodes of your favourite series _____ if you didn't have to go to work?
- 3 I'd go for a swim every single day if I _____ by the beach.
- 4 If I _____ five centimetres taller, I'd become a pilot.
- 5 Who _____ if you saw a U.F.O.?

see
tell
live
watch
be



What would you do in these situations?

You are told you're being moved to an office in another country.

You are asked to join a reality TV-show.

Your friend doesn't invite you to their wedding.

Your friend or family member asks you to lend them a large amount of money.



Discuss



Even if people worked less and had more time, they'd still be stressed. That's just modern life...

Do you agree with this statement or not?

What is the attitude towards work-life balance in your culture?

If you had the opportunity, would you make big changes to your lifestyle?





Answer key

- P. 4:** 1. Sarah and Jessica are in Jessica's new apartment.
2. It's currently raining outside.
- P. 5:** 3. She's planning to go to India to do a yoga course
4. Sarah has a mortgage and kids. Her kids are teenagers and they want the latest version of everything
- P. 8:** No, Sarah isn't putting money aside each month.
Yes, it is wet outside.
- P. 9:** If-clause: past simple
Result clause: would + bare infinitive
- P. 10:** *Was* is more commonly used these days.
- P. 12:** 1. (b) 2. (c) 3. (a)
- P. 13:** 1. lived; would try 2. was/were; would suggest 3. wouldn't mind; could 4. would you do; found 5. Would you travel; won
- P. 15:** *If I were you* is used for giving advice.
- P. 22:** 1. (d) 2. (d) 3. (d)
- P. 23:** 1. you saw 2. would you watch 3. lived 4. was/were 5. would you tell



Summary

Phrases for chatting with friends:

- Long time no see; It's been ages
- Can't complain; Busy as ever; You know how it is; I take it..., Do you take...?

Second conditional

- is used to express an **unreal** or **hypothetical situation** and its **probable result**
- *If*-clause: past simple
- Result clause: would + bare infinitive

Using the second conditional to give advice

- We use the phrase *If I were you, I'd ...* to tell someone what we would do in their situation.



Vocabulary

likely

unlikely

Long time no see

It's been ages

Can't complain

as busy as ever

You know how it is

I take it...

How about...?

to put (money) aside

to backpack

mortgage

canal

If I were you, I'd...

