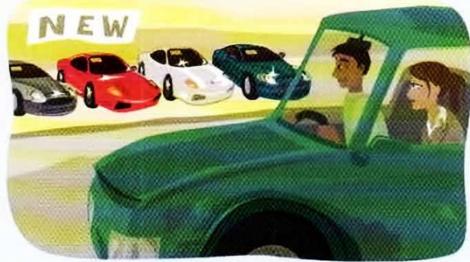


Would

A

We use **would ('d) / wouldn't** when we *imagine* a situation or action (= we think of something that is not real):

- It **would be** nice to buy a new car, but we can't afford it.
- I'd **love** to live by the sea.
- A: Shall I tell Chris what happened?
B: No, I **wouldn't say** anything.
(= I wouldn't say anything in your situation)



We use **would have (done)** when we imagine situations or actions in the past (= things that didn't happen):

- They helped us a lot. I don't know what we'd **have done**
(= we **would have done**) without their help.
- I didn't tell Sam what happened. He **wouldn't have been** pleased.

Compare **would (do)** and **would have (done)**:

- I **would call** Lisa, but I don't have her number. (*now*)
I **would have called** Lisa, but I didn't have her number. (*past*)
- I'm not going to invite them to the party. They **wouldn't come** anyway.
I didn't invite them to the party. They **wouldn't have come** anyway.

We often use **would** in sentences with **if** (see Units 38–40):

- I **would call** Lisa if I had her number.
- I **would have called** Lisa if I'd had her number.

B

Compare **will ('ll)** and **would ('d)**:

- I'll **stay** a little longer. I've got plenty of time.
I'd **stay** a little longer, but I really **have to go now**. (so I can't stay longer)
- I'll **call** Lisa. I have her number.
I'd **call** Lisa, but I don't have her number. (so I can't call her)

Sometimes **would/wouldn't** is the past of **will/won't**. Compare:

present

- TOM: I'll **call** you on Sunday.
- AMY: I promise I **won't be** late.
- LISA: Damn! The car **won't start**.

past

- Tom **said he'd call** me on Sunday.
- Amy **promised that she wouldn't be** late.
- Lisa was annoyed because her car **wouldn't start**.

Somebody **wouldn't do** something = he/she refused to do it:

- I tried to warn him, but he **wouldn't listen** to me. (= he refused to listen)
- The car **wouldn't start**. (= it 'refused' to start)

C

You can also use **would** to talk about things that happened regularly in the past:

- When we were children, we **lived by the sea**. In summer, if the weather was fine, we **would** all get up early and go for a swim. (= we did this regularly)
- Whenever Richard was angry, he **would** walk out of the room.

With this meaning, **would** is similar to **used to** (see Unit 18):

- Whenever Richard was angry, he **used to walk** out of the room.

Exercises

36.1 Write sentences about yourself. Imagine things you would like or wouldn't like.

- 1 (a place you'd love to live) I'd love to live by the sea.
- 2 (a job you wouldn't like to do)
- 3 (something you would love to do)
- 4 (something that would be nice to have)
- 5 (a place you'd like to go to)

36.2 Complete the sentences using **would** + the following verbs (in the correct form):

be be do enjoy enjoy have pass stop

- 1 They helped us a lot. I don't know what we **would have done** without their help.
- 2 You should go and see the film. You **would** it.
- 3 It's a pity you couldn't come to the party last night. You **would** it.
- 4 Shall I apply for the job or not? What **would** you **in my position**?
- 5 I was in a hurry when I saw you. Otherwise I **would** to talk.
- 6 We took a taxi home last night, but got stuck in the traffic. It **would** quicker to walk.
- 7 Why don't you go and see Clare? She **would** very pleased to see you.
- 8 Why didn't you do the exam? I'm sure you **wouldn't** it.
- 9 In an ideal world, everybody **would** enough to eat.

36.3 Each sentence on the right follows a sentence on the left. Which follows which?

- 1 I'd like to go to Australia one day.
- 2 I wouldn't like to live on a busy road.
- 3 I'm sorry the trip was cancelled.
- 4 I'm looking forward to going out tonight.
- 5 I'm glad we didn't go out in the rain.
- 6 I'm not looking forward to the trip.

- a It wouldn't have been very nice.
- b It would have been fun.
- c It would be nice.
- d It won't be much fun.
- e It wouldn't be very nice.
- f It will be fun.

- 1 c
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

36.4 Write sentences using **promised** + **would/wouldn't**.

- 1 I wonder why Laura is late. She **promised** she **wouldn't** be late.
- 2 I wonder why Steve hasn't called me. He **promised** .
- 3 Why did you tell Jane what I said? You **wouldn't** .
- 4 I'm surprised they didn't wait for us. They **wouldn't** .

36.5 Complete the sentences. Use **wouldn't** + a suitable verb.

- 1 I tried to warn him, but he **wouldn't listen** to me.
- 2 I asked Amanda what had happened, but she **wouldn't tell** me.
- 3 Paul was very angry about what I'd said and **wouldn't speak** to me for two weeks.
- 4 Martina insisted on carrying all her luggage. She **wouldn't let** me help her.

36.6 These sentences are about things that often happened in the past. Complete the sentences using **would** + these verbs:

forget help shake share walk

- 1 Whenever Richard was angry, he **would walk** out of the room.
- 2 We used to live next to a railway line. Every time a train went past, the house **would shake** .
- 3 Alan was a very kind man. He **would help** always **you** if you had a problem.
- 4 Katherine was always very generous. She didn't have much, but she **would share** what she had with everyone else.
- 5 You could never rely on Joe. It didn't matter how many times you reminded him to do something, he **would forget** .

Can/Could/Would you ... ? etc.

(Requests, offers, permission and invitations)

A

Asking people to do things (requests)

We use **can** or **could** to ask people to do things:

- Can you** wait a moment, please?
- or **Could you** wait a moment, please?
- Helen, **can you** do me a favour?
- Excuse me, **could you** tell me how to get to the airport?

Note that we say **Do you think** you **could** ... ? (*not can*):

- Do you think** you **could** take me to the station?

Could you open the door, please?



We also use **will** and **would** to ask people to do things (but **can/could** are more usual):

- Helen, **will you** do me a favour?
- Would you** please be quiet? I'm trying to concentrate.

B

Asking for things

To ask for something, we use **Can I have ... ?** / **Could I have ... ?** or **Can I get ... ?**:

- (*in a shop*) **Can I have** these postcards, please? or
Can I get these postcards, please?
- (*during a meal*) **Could I have** the salt, please?

May I have ... ? is also possible:

- May I have** these postcards, please?

C

Asking to do things

To ask to do something, we use **can**, **could** or **may**:

- (*on the phone*) Hello, **can** I speak to Steve, please?
- '**Could** I use your phone?' 'Sure.'
- Do you think** I **could** borrow your bike?
- '**May** I come in?' 'Yes, please do.'

May is more formal than **can** or **could**.

To ask to do something, you can also say **Do you mind if I ... ?**

or **Is it all right / Is it OK if I ... ?**:

- '**Do you mind** if I use your phone?' 'Sure. Go ahead.'
- '**Is it all right** if I come in?' 'Yes, of course.'

Could I use your phone?

Sure.



D

Offering to do things

To offer to do something, we use **Can I ... ?**:

- '**Can I** get you a cup of coffee?' 'That would be nice.'
- '**Can I** help you?' 'No, it's all right. I can manage.'

E

Offering and inviting

To offer or to invite, we use **Would you like ... ?** (*not Do you like*):

- '**Would you like** a cup of coffee?' 'Yes, please.'
- '**Would you like** to eat with us tonight?' 'I'd love to.'

I'd like ... is a polite way of saying what you want:

- (*at a tourist information office*) **I'd like** some information about hotels, please.
- (*in a shop*) **I'd like** to try on this jacket, please.

Exercises

37.1 Read the situations and write questions beginning **Can ... or Could ...**.

- 1 You're carrying a lot of things. You can't open the door yourself. There's a man standing near the door. You say to him: Could you open the door, please?
- 2 You phone Kate's office, but somebody else answers. Kate isn't there. You want to leave a message for her. You say:
- 3 You're a tourist. You want to go to the station, but you don't know how to get there. You ask at your hotel:
- 4 You are in a clothes shop. You see some trousers you like and you want to try them on. You say to the shop assistant:
- 5 You have a car. You have to go the same way as Steve, who is on foot. You offer him a lift. You say to him:

37.2 Read the situation and write a question using the word in brackets.

- 1 You want to borrow your friend's bike. What do you say to him?
(think) Do you think I could borrow your bike?
- 2 You are staying at a friend's house and you would like to make some coffee. What do you say?
(all right) Is it all right if I make some coffee?
- 3 You've filled in some forms in English. You want your friend to check them for you. What do you ask?
(think)
- 4 You want to leave work early. What do you ask your boss?
(mind)
- 5 The woman in the next room is playing music. It's very loud. You want her to turn it down. What do you say to her?
(think)
- 6 You're on a train. The window is open and you're feeling cold. You'd like to close it, but first you ask the woman next to you.
(OK)
- 7 You're still on the train. The woman next to you has finished reading her paper, and you'd like to have a look at it. You ask her.
(think)

37.3 What would you say in these situations?

- 1 Paul has come to see you in your flat. You offer him something to eat.
YOU: Would you like something to eat? ?
PAUL: No, thank you. I've just eaten.
- 2 You need help to charge the battery in your camera. You ask Kate.
YOU: I don't know how to charge the battery. ?
KATE: Sure. It's easy. All you have to do is this.
- 3 You're on a bus. You have a seat, but an elderly man is standing. You offer him your seat.
YOU:, ?
MAN: Oh, that's very kind of you. Thank you very much.
- 4 You're the passenger in a car. Your friend is driving very fast. You ask her to slow down.
YOU: You're making me very nervous. ?
DRIVER: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realise I was going so fast.
- 5 You've finished your meal in a restaurant and now you want the bill. You ask the waiter:
YOU:, ?
WAITER: Sure. I'll get it for you now.
- 6 A friend of yours is interested in one of your books. You invite him to borrow it.
FRIEND: This looks very interesting.
YOU: Yes, it's a good book. ?

If I do ... and If I did ...

A

Compare these examples:

- (1) LISA: Shall we go by bus or by train?
 JESS: If we go by bus, it will be cheaper.

For Jess, it is possible that they will go by bus, so she says:

If we go by bus, it will be ...



LISA JESS

If we go by bus,
 it will be cheaper.

- (2) Lisa and Jess decide to go by train.

Later, Jess talks to Joe.

- JOE: How are you going to travel?
 JESS: We're going by train. If we went by bus, it would be cheaper, but the train is quicker.

Now Jess knows they are not going to travel by bus, so she says:

If we went by bus, it would be ... (not If we go ...)

If we went by bus, it would be cheaper.



JOE JESS

When we imagine something that will not happen, or we don't expect that it will happen, we use if + past (if we went / if there was / if you found etc.).

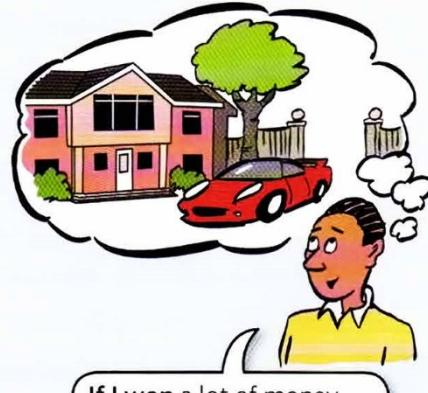
But the meaning is not past:

- What would you do if you won a lot of money?
 (we don't really expect this to happen)
- If there was (or were) an election tomorrow, who would you vote for?

For if ... was/were, see Unit 39C.

Compare if I find and if I found:

- I think I left my watch at your house. If you find it, can you call me?
 but If you found a wallet in the street, what would you do with it?



If I won a lot of money ...

B

We do not normally use would in the if-part of the sentence:

- I'd be very scared if somebody pointed a gun at me. (not if somebody would point)
- If we went by bus, it would be cheaper. (not If we would go)

But you can use if ... would when you ask somebody to do something:

- (from a formal letter) I would be grateful if you would let me know your decision as soon as possible.

C

In the other part of the sentence (not the if-part) we use would ('d) / wouldn't:

- What would you do if you were bitten by a snake?
- I'm not going to bed yet. I'm not tired. If I went to bed now, I wouldn't sleep.
- Would you mind if I used your phone?

Could and might are also possible:

- If I won a lot of money, I might buy a house. (= it is possible that I would buy a house)
- If it stopped raining, we could go out. (= we would be able to go out)

Exercises

38.1 What do you say in these situations?

- 1 Of course you don't expect to win the lottery. Which do you say?
 a If I win the lottery, I'll buy a big house.
 b If I won the lottery, I'd buy a big house. (b is correct)
- 2 You're not going to sell your car because it's old and not worth much. Which do you say?
 a If I sell my car, I won't get much money for it.
 b If I sold my car, I wouldn't get much money for it.
- 3 You often see Sarah. A friend of yours wants to contact her. Which do you say?
 a If I see Sarah, I'll tell her to call you.
 b If I saw Sarah, I'd tell her to call you.
- 4 You don't expect that there will be a fire in the building. Which do you say?
 a What will you do if there is a fire in the building?
 b What would you do if there was a fire in the building?
- 5 You've never lost your passport. You can only imagine it.
 a I don't know what I'll do if I lose my passport.
 b I don't know what I'd do if I lost my passport.
- 6 Somebody stops you and asks the way to a bank. Which do you say?
 a If you go right at the end of this street, you'll see a bank on your left.
 b If you went right at the end of this street, you'd see a bank on your left.
- 7 You're in a lift. There is an emergency button. Nobody is going to press it. Which do you say?
 a What will happen if somebody presses that button?
 b What would happen if somebody pressed that button?

38.2 Put the verb into correct form.

- 1 I'd be very scared if somebody pointed (point) a gun at me.
- 2 I can't afford to buy a car. If I (buy) a car, I'd have to borrow the money.
- 3 Don't lend Amy your car. If she (ask) me, I wouldn't lend her mine.
- 4 If the computer factory closed down, many people (lose) their jobs.
- 5 I don't think Gary and Emma will get married. I (be) amazed if they did.
- 6 What would you do if you (be) in a lift and it (stop) between floors?
- 7 If somebody (give) me £10,000, I (have) a very long holiday.

38.3 Write sentences beginning If

- 1 We've decided not to catch the 10.30 train. (arrive too early)
 If we caught the 10.30 train, we'd arrive too early.
- 2 Kevin is not going to do his driving test now. (fail)
 If he
- 3 We've decided not to stay at a hotel. (cost too much)
 If
- 4 Sally isn't going to leave her job. (not / get another one)

- 5 We've decided not to invite Ben to the party. (have to invite his friends too)

- 6 I'm not going to tell him what happened. (not / believe me)

38.4 Use your own ideas to complete these sentences.

- 1 If I won a lot of money, I'd buy a house.
- 2 I'd be very angry if
- 3 If you bought a car,
- 4 I'd be surprised if
- 5 Would you mind if

If I knew ... I wish I knew ...

A

Study this example situation:

Sarah wants to phone Paul, but she can't do this because she doesn't know his number. She says:

If I knew his number, I **would phone** him.

Sarah says: **If I knew** his number This tells us that she *doesn't* know his number. She is imagining the situation. The *real* situation is that she *doesn't* know his number.



If I knew his number ...

When we imagine a situation like this, we use **if + past** (**if I knew** / **if you were** / **if we didn't** etc.). But the meaning is present, *not* past:

- There are many things I'd like to do **if I had** more time. (but I don't have time)
- If I didn't** want to go to the party, I wouldn't go. (but I want to go)
- We wouldn't have any money **if we didn't** work. (but we work)
- If you were** in my position, what would you do?
- It's a pity he can't drive. It would be useful **if he could**.

B

We use the past in the same way after **wish** (**I wish I knew** / **I wish you were** etc.). We use **wish** to say that we regret something, that something is not as we would like it to be:

- I wish I knew** Paul's phone number.
(= I don't know it and I regret this)
- Do you ever **wish you could** fly?
(you can't fly)
- It rains a lot here. **I wish it didn't** rain so much.
- It's very crowded here. **I wish there weren't** so many people. (there are a lot of people)
- I wish I didn't** have to work tomorrow, but unfortunately I do.



C

If I were / if I was

After **if** and **wish**, you can use **were** instead of **was** (**if I were** / **I wish it were** etc.).

If I was / I wish it was are also possible. So you can say:

- | | | |
|--|----|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> If I were you, I wouldn't buy that coat. | or | If I was you, ... |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'd go for a walk if it weren't so cold. | or | ... if it wasn't so cold. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I wish she were here. | or | I wish she was here. |

D

We do not normally use **would** in the **if**-part of the sentence or after **wish**:

- If I were** rich, I **would** travel a lot. (*not* If I would be rich)
- Who **would** you ask **if you needed** help? (*not* if you would need)
- I wish I had** something to read. (*not* I wish I would have)

Sometimes **wish ... would** is possible: **I wish you would listen**. See Unit 41.

E

Could sometimes means 'would be able to' and sometimes 'was/were able to':

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> She could get a better job
if she could speak English. | (she could get = she would be able to get)
(if she could speak = if she was/were able to speak) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I wish I could help you. | (I wish I could = I wish I was able) |

Exercises

39.1 Put the verb into the correct form.

- 1 If I knew (I / know) his number, I would phone him.
- 2 I wouldn't buy (I / not / buy) that coat if I were you.
- 3 (I / help) you if I could, but I'm afraid I can't.
- 4 We don't need a car at present, but we would need a car if (we / live) in the country.
- 5 If we had the choice, (we / live) in the country.
- 6 This soup isn't very good. (it / taste) better if it wasn't so salty.
- 7 I wouldn't mind living in England if the weather (be) better.
- 8 If I were you, (I / not / wait). (I / go) now.
- 9 You're always tired. If (you / not / go) to bed so late every night, you wouldn't be tired all the time.
- 10 I think there are too many cars. If (there / not / be) so many cars, (there / not / be) so much pollution.

39.2 Write a sentence with if ... for each situation.

- 1 We don't see you very often because you live so far away.
If live so far away, we'd see you more often.
- 2 It's a nice book but it's too expensive, so I'm not going to buy it.
I it if so
- 3 We don't go out very often – we can't afford it.
We more often
- 4 I can't meet you tomorrow – I have to work late.
If
- 5 It would be nice to have lunch outside but it's raining, so we can't.
We
- 6 I don't want his advice, and that's why I'm not going to ask for it.
If

39.3 Write sentences beginning I wish

- 1 I don't know many people (and I'm lonely). I wish I knew more people.
- 2 I don't have a computer (and I need one). I wish
- 3 Helen isn't here (and I need to see her).
- 4 It's cold (and I hate cold weather).
- 5 I live in a big city (and I don't like it).
- 6 I can't go to the party (and I'd like to).
- 7 I have to get up early tomorrow (but I'd like to sleep late).
- 8 I don't know anything about cars (and my car has just broken down).
- 9 I'm not feeling well (and it's not nice).

39.4 Write your own sentences beginning I wish

- 1 (somewhere you'd like to be now – on the beach, in New York, in bed etc.)
I wish I
- 2 (something you'd like to have – a motorbike, more friends, lots of money etc.)
- 3 (something you'd like to be able to do – sing, travel more, cook etc.)
- 4 (something you'd like to be – beautiful, strong, younger etc.)