Mixed Conditional

WHEN TO USE, HOW TO USE, EXAMPLES

When to use the mixed conditional

For unreal past conditions and their probable results in the present.

For unreal present conditions and their probable results in the past.

Both past and present situations are contrary to reality.

➢The time frame is past in the if clause and present in the main clause.

➢OR present in the if clause and past in the main clause.

➢The situation is contrary to reality.

Mixed conditional formats

If clause (condition)   Main clause (result)

if + past perfect   present (continuous) conditional

(if this had happened   this would happen / be happening)

if + simple past   perfect (continuous) conditional

(if this happened   this would have happened / been happening)

The order is not fixed, so you can swap the condition and result.

You might have to pay attention to pronouns.

Mixed conditional examples

1. Unreal past and its probable result in the present.

➢If I had learned to ski, I could be on the slopes now.

➢I could be on the slopes now if I had learned to ski.

➢I would be rich if I had won the lottery.

➢If I had won the lottery, I would be rich.

➢If I had learned a foreign language, I would have better job prospects.

➢I would have better job prospects if I had learned a foreign language.

Mixed conditional examples

2. Unreal present and its probable result in the past.

➢If I spoke German, I could have translated that letter for you.

➢I could have translated that letter for you if I spoke German.

➢I would be happy to help if I wasn't busy.

➢If I wasn't busy, I would be happy to help.

➢If I could speak a foreign language, I would have had better job prospects.

➢I would have had better job prospects if I could speak a foreign language.