

Second conditional — unreal present/future

Meaning

We use the second conditional to talk about **imaginary** or **unlikely** situations in the present or future and their results.

- If we had a country house, we would go there every weekend.
- Would you travel more if you won the lottery?

Form

Part	Structure	Example
If-clause	if + past simple (or were)	If I had more time... / If he were richer...
Main clause	would / could / might + base verb	...I would learn Italian. / ... we could buy a car.
Negative	wouldn't + base verb	If it rained , we wouldn't go .
Questions	Would + subject + base verb ... if ...?	Would you move if you found a better job?

⚠ Don't use **would** in the if-clause: *If I would have time... → If I **had** time...

Word order & commas

- If I won the lottery, I'd buy a yacht. **comma ✓**
- I'd buy a yacht if I won the lottery. **no comma ✓**

unless = if (not)

- I wouldn't drive there unless I had a 4×4.
- = I wouldn't drive there if I didn't have a 4×4.

Would / could / might

- **would** → result in general: It would be expensive.
- **could** → ability/possibility: We could save money.
- **might** → weaker possibility: He might change his mind.

Was or were?

- Both are possible in spoken English: If he was/were here, he'd help.
- Use **were** in the set phrase **If I were you** (giving advice):
If I were you, I'd stay at home and rest.

Quick examples

Plan: If we lived nearer, we would visit more often.

Ability: If I spoke Japanese, I could work in Tokyo.

Possibility: We might buy it if it was/were cheaper.

Negative: If it snowed, the flight wouldn't leave.

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