

# Second Conditional

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Use the **second conditional** to talk about impossible, imaginary, or unlikely situations:

- If I were an animal, I'd be a tiger. (impossible)
- What would you do if you had a billion dollars? (imaginary)
- If Americans ate less fast food, they'd be healthier. (unlikely)

There are two parts to a **second conditional** sentence: the **condition** and the **result**:

CONDITION	RESULT
<b>if + subject + simple past</b>	<b>subject + would/might/could + verb</b>
If he exercised more,	he'd be thinner.
If I were taller,	I could be a professional basketball player.
If the teacher spoke more slowly,	we'd understand her better.
If your company went bankrupt,	what would you do?

It is possible to reverse the condition and the result:

- If he exercised more, he'd be thinner.
- = He'd be thinner if he exercised more.

How to form the second conditional:

- **CONDITION:** if + subject + simple past
  - If he exercised more,
  - If I were taller,
  - If the teacher spoke more slowly,
  - If your company went bankrupt,
- **RESULT:** subject + would/might/could + verb

*With **would**, it's common to use the contractions: I'd, you'd, he'd, she'd, we'd, they'd*

- he'd be thinner.
- I could be a professional basketball player.
- we'd understand her better.
- what would you do?

What's the difference between would, might, and could?

- **would** – the result is more definite or certain
  - If Peter asked Karen to marry him, she **would** say yes.
  - (In this case, we know that Karen loves Peter very much)
- **might** - the result may or may not happen

- If Peter asked Karen to marry him, she **might** say yes... but she **might** say no.
- (In this case, we aren't sure if Karen loves Peter or not)
- **could** - to talk about possible results
  - If I had a million dollars, I **could** do anything! I **could** buy a new car every month, I **could** have my own helicopter, I **could** live in a mansion, I **could** eat expensive gourmet food, I **could** quit my job...
  - ("could" emphasizes the opening of possibilities)

*Quiz on the next page*

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# Quiz: Second Conditional

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1. If I were you, \_\_\_\_\_ a new girlfriend.  
  - A. I found
  - B. I'd find
  - C. I've found
2. I'd help you if I \_\_\_\_\_ more about computers.  
  - A. knew
  - B. known
  - C. would know
3. \_\_\_\_\_ happier if he stopped worrying about everything.  
  - A. He was
  - B. He's
  - C. He'd be
4. If we \_\_\_\_\_ so much, we'd have time to take guitar lessons.  
  - A. couldn't work
  - B. didn't work
  - C. wouldn't work
5. If you \_\_\_\_\_ one thing about your appearance, what would you change?  
  - A. changed
  - B. could change
  - C. will change

6. My manager \_\_\_\_\_ so stressed if he took more time off.
- A. isn't
  - B. wasn't
  - C. wouldn't be
7. You \_\_\_\_\_ more things done if you didn't spend so much time online!
- A. could get
  - B. got
  - C. don't get
8. What \_\_\_\_\_ if you didn't have to go to work tomorrow?
- A. do you do
  - B. did you do
  - C. would you do
9. If \_\_\_\_\_ a car accident happen, I'd call an ambulance.
- A. I could see
  - B. I'd see
  - C. I saw
10. If I met Brad Pitt, \_\_\_\_\_ him for an autograph!
- A. I asked
  - B. I'd ask
  - C. I didn't ask

# Quiz Answers: Second Conditional

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1. B
2. A
3. C
4. B
5. B
6. C
7. A
8. C
9. C
10. B

