

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

A

Compare these examples:

(1) Lisa has lost her watch. She tells Sue:

LISA: I've lost my watch. Have you seen it anywhere?

SUE: No, but if I find it, I'll tell you.

In this example, Sue feels there is a real possibility that she will find the watch. So she says:
if I find ... , I'll ...

(2) Joe says:

If I found a wallet in the street, I'd take it to the police station.

This is a different type of situation. Here, Joe doesn't expect to find a wallet in the street; he is *imagining* a situation that will probably not happen. So he says:

if I found ... , I'd (= I would) ... (not if I find ... , I'll ...)

When you imagine something like this, you use *if + past* (if I found / if there was / if we didn't etc.).

But the meaning is *not* past:

- ☐ What would you do if you won a million pounds?
(we don't really expect this to happen)
- ☐ I don't really want to go to their party, but I probably will go. They'd be upset if I didn't go.
- ☐ If there was (or were) an election tomorrow, who would you vote for?

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

If I won a million pounds ...



B

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

- ☐ I'd be very frightened if somebody pointed a gun at me. (not if somebody would point)
- ☐ If I didn't go to their party, they'd be upset. (not If I wouldn't 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*:

- ☐ If you took more exercise, you'd (= you would) feel better.
- ☐ 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 you took more exercise, you might feel better. (= it is possible that you would feel better)
- ☐ If it stopped raining, we could go out. (= we would be able to go out)

D

Do not use *when* in sentences like those on this page:

- ☐ They'd be upset if I didn't go to their party. (not when I didn't go)
- ☐ What would you do if you were bitten by a snake? (not when you were bitten)

Adapted from: Murphy, Raymond. English Grammar in Use: A Self-Study Reference and Practice Book for Intermediate Learners of English - with Answers. 3rd ed., Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Will → Units 21–22 If and when → Unit 25D Would → Unit 36 If I knew → Unit 39
If I had known → Unit 40

38.1 Put the verb into the correct form.

- 1 They would be offended if I didn't go to their party. (not / go)
- 2 If you took more exercise, you would feel better. (feel)
- 3 If they offered me the job, I think I it. (take)
- 4 A lot of people would be out of work if the car factory (close down)
- 5 If I sold my car, I much money for it. (not / get)
- 6 (in a lift) What would happen if somebody that red button? (press)
- 7 I don't think there's any chance that Gary and Emma will get married. I'd be absolutely astonished if they (do)
- 8 Liz gave me this ring. She very upset if I lost it. (be)
- 9 Dave and Kate are expecting us. They would be very disappointed if we (not / come)
- 10 Would Steve mind if I his bike without asking him? (borrow)
- 11 What would you do if somebody in here with a gun? (walk)
- 12 I'm sure Sue if you explained the situation to her. (understand)

38.2 You ask a friend to imagine these situations. You ask What would you do if ... ?

- 1 (imagine – you win a lot of money)
What would you do if you won a lot of money?
- 2 (imagine – you lose your passport)
What
- 3 (imagine – there's a fire in the building)
.....
- 4 (imagine – you're in a lift and it stops between floors)
.....

38.3 Answer the questions in the way shown.

- 1 A: Shall we catch the 10.30 train?
B: No. (arrive too early) If we caught the 10.30 train, we'd arrive too early.
- 2 A: Is Kevin going to take his driving test?
B: No. (fail) If he
- 3 A: Why don't we stay at a hotel?
B: No. (cost too much) If
- 4 A: Is Sally going to apply for the job?
B: No. (not / get it) If
- 5 A: Let's tell them the truth.
B: No. (not / believe us) If
- 6 A: Why don't we invite Bill to the party?
B: No. (have to invite his friends too)
.....

38.4 Use your own ideas to complete these sentences.

- 1 If you took more exercise, you'd feel better.
- 2 I'd be very angry if
- 3 If I didn't go to work tomorrow,
- 4 Would you go to the party if
- 5 If you bought some new clothes,
- 6 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.



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

- ☐ Tom would read more if he **had** more time. (but he doesn't have much 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 you can't drive. It **would** be useful if you **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 often.
- ☐ 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.). **I was** / **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 out if it weren't so cold. | or | ... if it wasn't so cold. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I wish Carol were here. | or | I wish Carol 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** have a yacht. (*not* If I **would** be rich)
- ☐ 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':

- ☐ You **could** get a better job (you **could** get = you would be able to get)
- if you **could** use a computer. (you **could** use = you were able to use)

39.1 Put the verb into the correct form.

- 1 If I knew (know) his number, I would phone him.
- 2 I wouldn't buy (not / buy) that coat if I were you.
- 3 I (help) you if I could, but I'm afraid I can't.
- 4 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 you didn't live so far away, we'd see you more often.
- 2 This book is too expensive, so I'm not going to buy it.
I'd if
- 3 We don't go out very often – we can't afford it.
We
- 4 I can't meet you tomorrow – I have to work late.
If
- 5 It's raining, so we can't have lunch outside.
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 mobile phone (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 work tomorrow (but I'd like to stay in bed).
.....
- 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 computer, a job, lots of money etc.)
.....
- 3 (something you'd like to be able to do – sing, speak a language, fly etc.)
.....
- 4 (something you'd like to be – beautiful, strong, rich etc.)
.....

A

Study this example situation:

Last month Gary was in hospital for a few days. Rachel didn't know this, so she didn't go to visit him. They met a few days ago. Rachel said:

If I had known you were in hospital, I would have gone to see you.

Rachel said: If I had known you were in hospital This tells us that she *didn't* know he was in hospital.

We use **if + had ('d)** ... to talk about the past (if I had known/been/done etc.):

- ☐ I didn't see you when you passed me in the street. If I'd seen you, of course I would have said hello. (but I didn't see you)
- ☐ I decided to stay at home last night. I would have gone out if I hadn't been so tired. (but I was tired)
- ☐ If he had been looking where he was going, he wouldn't have walked into the wall. (but he wasn't looking)
- ☐ The view was wonderful. If I'd had a camera with me, I would have taken some photographs. (but I didn't have a camera)

Compare:

- ☐ I'm not hungry. If I was hungry, I would eat something. (*now*)
- ☐ I wasn't hungry. If I had been hungry, I would have eaten something. (*past*)

B

Do not use **would** in the **if**-part of the sentence. We use **would** in the other part of the sentence:

- ☐ If I had seen you, I would have said hello. (*not* If I would have seen you)

Note that **'d** can be **would** or **had**:

- ☐ If I'd seen you, (I'd seen = I had seen)
I'd have said hello. (I'd have said = I would have said)

C

We use **had (done)** in the same way after **wish**. I wish something **had happened** = I am sorry that it didn't happen:

- ☐ I wish I'd known that Gary was ill. I would have gone to see him. (but I didn't know)
- ☐ I feel sick. I wish I hadn't eaten so much cake. (I ate too much cake)
- ☐ Do you wish you had studied science instead of languages? (you didn't study science)

Do not use **would have ...** after **wish**:

- ☐ The weather was cold while we were away. I wish it had been warmer. (*not* I wish it would have been)

D

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

- ☐ If I had gone to the party last night, I would be tired now. (I am not tired now – *present*)
- ☐ If I had gone to the party last night, I would have met lots of people. (I didn't meet lots of people – *past*)

Compare **would have**, **could have** and **might have**:

- ☐ If the weather hadn't been so bad,

{	we would have gone out. we could have gone out. (= we would have been able to go out) we might have gone out. (= perhaps we would have gone out)
---	--

40.1 Put the verb into the correct form.

- I didn't know you were in hospital. If I'd known (I / know), I would have gone (I / go) to see you.
- Sam got to the station just in time to catch the train to the airport. If (he / miss) the train, (he / miss) his flight.
- I'm glad that you reminded me about Amanda's birthday. (I / forget) if (you / not / remind) me.
- Unfortunately I forgot my address book when I went on holiday. If (I / have) your address, (I / send) you a postcard.
- A: How was your holiday? Did you have a nice time?
B: It was OK, but (we / enjoy) it more if (the weather / be) nicer.
- I took a taxi to the hotel, but the traffic was bad. (it / be) quicker if (I / walk).
- I'm not tired. If (I / be) tired, I'd go home now.
- I wasn't tired last night. If (I / be) tired, I would have gone home earlier.

40.2 For each situation, write a sentence beginning with If.

- I wasn't hungry, so I didn't eat anything.
If I'd been hungry, I would have eaten something.
- The accident happened because the road was icy.
If the road
- I didn't know that Joe had to get up early, so I didn't wake him up.
If I
- I was able to buy the car only because Jane lent me the money.
.....
- Karen wasn't injured in the crash because she was wearing a seat belt.
.....
- You didn't have any breakfast – that's why you're hungry now.
.....
- I didn't get a taxi because I didn't have any money.
.....

40.3 Imagine that you are in these situations. For each situation, write a sentence with I wish.

- You've eaten too much and now you feel sick.
You say: I wish I hadn't eaten so much.
- There was a job advertised in the newspaper. You decided not to apply for it. Now you think that your decision was wrong.
You say: I wish I
- When you were younger, you never learned to play a musical instrument. Now you regret this.
You say:
- You've painted the gate red. Now you think that red was the wrong colour.
You say:
- You are walking in the country. You'd like to take some photographs, but you didn't bring your camera.
You say:
- You have some unexpected guests. They didn't phone first to say they were coming. You are very busy and you are not prepared for them.
You say (to yourself):

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Answer key

UNIT 38

38.1

- 3 'd take / would take
- 4 closed down
- 5 wouldn't get
- 6 pressed
- 7 did
- 8 'd be / would be
- 9 didn't come
- 10 borrowed
- 11 walked
- 12 would understand

38.2

- 2 What would you do if you lost your passport?
- 3 What would you do if there was/were a fire in the building?
- 4 What would you do if you were in a lift and it stopped between floors?

38.3

- 2 If he took his driving test, he'd fail (it). / ... he would fail (it).
- 3 If we stayed at a hotel, it would cost too much.
- 4 If she applied for the job, she wouldn't get it.
- 5 If we told them the truth, they wouldn't believe us.
- 6 If we invited Bill, we'd have to invite his friends too. / ... we would have to ...

38.4

Example answers:

- 2 I'd be very angry if somebody broke into my house.
- 3 If I didn't go to work tomorrow, I'd have a much nicer day than usual.
- 4 Would you go to the party if you were invited?
- 5 If you bought some new clothes, you'd feel much better.
- 6 Would you mind if I didn't go out with you this evening?

UNIT 39

39.1

- 3 'd help / would help
- 4 lived
- 5 'd live / would live
- 6 would taste
- 7 were/was
- 8 wouldn't wait ... 'd go / would go
- 9 didn't go
- 10 weren't ... wouldn't be

39.2

- 2 I'd buy it / I would buy it if it weren't/wasn't so expensive. *or* ... if it were/was cheaper.
- 3 We'd go out / We would go out more often if we could afford it.
- 4 If I didn't have to work late, I could meet you tomorrow. *or* ... I'd meet / I would meet ... *or* ... I'd be able to meet ...
- 5 We could have lunch outside if it weren't raining / wasn't raining.
- 6 If I wanted his advice, I'd ask for it / I would ask for it.

39.3

- 2 I wish I had a mobile phone.
- 3 I wish Helen were/was here.
- 4 I wish it weren't/wasn't (so) cold.
- 5 I wish I didn't live in a big city.
- 6 I wish I could go to the party.
- 7 I wish I didn't have to work tomorrow.
- 8 I wish I knew something about cars.
- 9 I wish I were feeling / was feeling better.

39.4

Example answers:

- 1 I wish I was at home.
- 2 I wish I had a big garden.
- 3 I wish I could tell jokes.
- 4 I wish I was taller.

UNIT 40

40.1

- 2 If he'd missed / he had missed the train, he'd have missed / he would have missed his flight.
- 3 I'd have forgotten / I would have forgotten ... you hadn't reminded
- 4 I'd had / I had had ... I'd have sent / I would have sent
- 5 we'd have enjoyed / we would have enjoyed ... the weather had been
- 6 It would have been ... I'd walked / I had walked
- 7 I were / I was
- 8 I'd been / I had been

40.2

- 2 If the road hadn't been icy, the accident wouldn't have happened.
- 3 If I'd known / If I had known (that Joe had to get up early), I'd have woken / I would have woken him up.
- 4 If Jane hadn't lent me the money, I wouldn't have been able to buy the car. *or* ... I couldn't have bought the car.
- 5 If Karen hadn't been wearing a seat belt, she'd have been injured / she would have been injured (in the crash).
- 6 If you'd had / If you had had (some) breakfast, you wouldn't be hungry now.
- 7 If I'd had / If I had had (some) money, I'd have got / I would have got a taxi.

40.3

- 2 I wish I'd applied / I wish I had applied for it. *or* ... for the job.
- 3 I wish I'd learned / I wish I had learned to play a musical instrument (when I was younger).
- 4 I wish I hadn't painted it red. *or* ... the gate red.
- 5 I wish I'd brought / I wish I had brought my camera.
- 6 I wish they'd phoned / I wish they had phoned first (to say they were coming). *or* I wish I'd known / I wish I had known they were coming.