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The second conditional (also called *conditional type 2*) is a structure used for talking about *unreal situations in the present or in the future*. We are thinking about a particular condition in the future, and the result of this condition.

When to use the second conditional

We use the second conditional or type 2 conditional in two ways:

1. To talk about events in the future that are probably *not going to happen*.
2. To talk about *impossible or unreal* situations in the present (hypothetical).

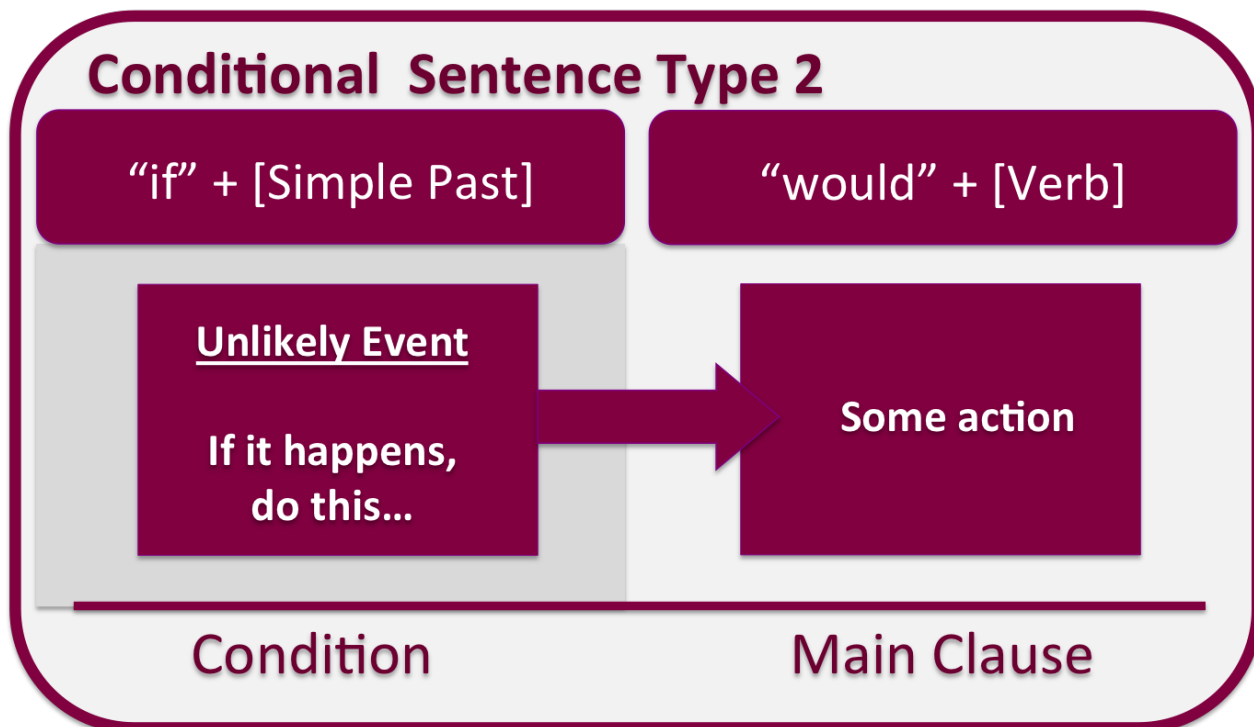
The 'if' clause states the *condition* while the main clause states the *result* of the condition - if it were true.

- *If I **won** the lottery, I **would buy** a car.*
- *I **would be** happy if I **married** Mary.*

How to form the second conditional

Just like the first conditional, the second conditional is made up of two clauses:

1. An 'if'/condition clause
2. A main/result clause



via <https://www.cglearn.it/mysite/grammar/verbs/conditional-sentences/second-conditional/>

- If it **snowed** this July ('if' clause/condition) + I **would be** so surprised. (main/result clause)
- I **would come** in last (main/result clause) + if I **ran** a marathon. ('if' clause/condition)

The 'if' clause uses the [Past Simple](#) tense. The main clause (result clause) uses the Present conditional (would + verb) or Present Continuous conditional (would + be + -ing verb).

- *If I were you, I would wear a helmet.* (condition = *if I were you* - which is untrue and impossible)
- *I would donate all my money to charity if I had millions of dollars.* (condition = *if I had millions of dollars* - which is unlikely; result = *I would donate all my money to charity.*)
- *I would be having a good time if I met my friends.*

The order of the clauses *is not important*. We can put the 'if' clause first or second. However, since the 'if' clause is a subordinate clause, (can't stand alone as a full sentence), we should put a *comma* after the 'if' clause when it comes *before the main clause* (result clause).

- *If I could fly, I would fly around the world.* (the 'if' clause is first, thus a comma follows)

- *I would end your pain if I had the cure for cancer.* (the 'if' clause is second, thus no comma is needed)

We can also use [modals](#) (*could, might, should*) in the main clause of second conditional sentences.

- *If we made more money, we **might take** more vacations.*
- *He **couldn't go** to the concert if you gave him a ticket.*
- *I **could quit** my job if I won the lottery.*

We can make positive, negative, and interrogative sentences using the second conditional.

- *Jamie **wouldn't** go if you invited him.*
- *If we **weren't** away, we **would** go to the party.*
- *What **would** you do if a meteor hit the earth right now?*

Note: The word 'if' is a common feature of conditional statements. However, it is also possible to use words like 'provided' and 'as long as' in conditional structures. We use them with similar meaning when we want to emphasize the condition.

- *Provided you pay me back soon (condition), I will lend you the money.*
- *I think I'll continue studying English, as long as I have the time to do so (condition).*

Here's a good video from Learn English on Skype explaining when and how to use the second conditional:

Read more on conditionals:

[Zero and First Conditional](#)

[The Third Conditional](#)

[Mixed Conditionals](#)