Table Of Contents:

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](#)