

Mixed conditionals

Introduction



If he'd taken his medicine, he'd be out of bed by now.

Definition

Mixed conditional sentences are those that don't follow the constructions of zero, first, second or third conditionals.

Construction

Here are the constructions of zero, first, second and third conditionals.

Type	Construction/time reference	Example
Zero	'if' + present, + present	If you heat water, it boils.
First	any time condition + any time result 'if' + present, + future future condition and future result	If it rains, we'll go to the cinema instead.
Second	'if' + past, + 'would/could' + bare infinitive future condition and future result [or] present condition and present result [or] present condition and future result	If they won the lottery, they'd buy a new car. If they had more money, they would buy a new car. If they had more money, they could buy a new car.
Third	If + past perfect, + modal + 'have' + past participle past condition and past result	If I had taken an earlier train I would not have been late for my meeting.

However, many other constructions are possible. The two most common types of mixed

conditional are:

1. Third + second:

If she **had studied** harder at college, she **would have** a more interesting job.

2. Second + third:

If he **worked** on Saturdays, he **would not have been able to come** to the party.

Uses and constructions

There are a lot of possible contexts for mixed conditional constructions depending on the timing of the two clauses. Here are some examples:

Time reference	Examples
Past condition and present result <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>If either of them had taken precautions, she wouldn't be pregnant. [But they didn't so she is.]</p> <p>Would I speak better French if I'd been brought up in France?</p> <p>Even if he hadn't gone on holiday he wouldn't be working today.</p>
Present condition and past result <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Could I have had private dental treatment if I had premium insurance?</p> <p>If John spoke good English, he could have moved to the London office. [But he doesn't so he didn't.]</p> <p>If I didn't have so much work to do, I would have gone to the cinema last night.</p>
Past condition and future result <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>If she hadn't spent so much in the sales, she could be coming with us to Miami next week. [But she did so she isn't.]</p> <p>Would John be moving to the London office if had got a better score on his TOEIC?</p> <p>If you hadn't concentrated during the mathematics course you would not be able to understand next term's data analysis course.</p>
Future condition and past result <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>If our Japanese counterparts weren't visiting tomorrow, we wouldn't have had to rearrange the boardroom.</p> <p>If John weren't going to join the London office, would he have accepted the position in Sweden?</p> <p>If I didn't have such a busy schedule next week, I would have asked for a holiday.</p>

Future condition and present result	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>If our Japanese counterparts weren't visiting tomorrow, we would still need to tidy the boardroom.</p> <p>If John were not going to the London office, would he be as happy as he is now?</p> <p>If I didn't have the seminar next week, I wouldn't be so busy today.</p>
Future condition and imperative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>If you don't finish that report on time, work through lunch - it's vitally important.</p> <p>If you see him, tell him that I'm waiting for him.</p> <p>If you ever visit the office, don't park in the director's space, will you?</p>

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