The second conditional

If I had enough money, I'd buy that diamond necklace.

Definition

The second conditional refers to events that are not likely to happen in the future or to conditions that are not possible in the present.

Construction

Construction	Time reference	Example
1. 'if' + past, + 'would/could' + bare infinitive	1. future condition + future result	If I won the lottery, I would buy that car.
	2. present condition + present result	If I were rich, I could buy that car.
	3. present condition + future result	If I were rich, I would buy that car.
2. 'if' + 'were to' + infinitive, + would/could + bare infinitive		If I were to win the lottery, I would buy that car.

Note that

1. **Continuous tenses are also possible.**

   If I weren't working today, I'd be enjoying the sunshine.

2. **As with all conditionals the 'if' clause can come first or second. When it comes first, it is followed by a comma.**

Uses

Use		Examples
Hypothesis		If the airline lost my luggage, I would need to buy a suit for the meeting. This is a hypothetical situation and the speaker may not even be travelling. Contrast this with a first conditional sentence. 'If the airline loses my luggage, I will need to buy a suit'. In this case the speaker feels that there is a real risk that the airline will lose his luggage.
Contingency		What would you do if you had to choose another career?
Wishing		If I won the lottery, I'd buy a boat and cruise the world.
Suggesting		I think it would be better if we sent a small sample to the customers.

Advising		**If I were you, I'd apply for a promotion.**
Criticism		**If this were my office, I'd tidy it up.**
Polite request		**Would it be all right, if I brought a friend with me?**

Formality

It is considered grammatically correct to use 'were' for all forms of 'be' in conditional sentences, but in spoken English you will often hear 'was' for I, he, she and it.

If I was rich, I would buy a boat.

If he wasn't so busy, he could have a holiday.

We would go to the park, if it wasn't raining.

In written English and certainly for any test situation, use 'were' for all forms of 'be'.