

UNIT 66

Unreal Conditionals: Present



CHECK POINT

Circle T (True) or F (False).

T F Schroeder, the piano player, wants to marry Lucy.

CHART CHECK

Circle T (True) or F (False).

T F Use the simple present tense in the *if* clause.

T F Use *were* for all subjects.

T F Use a comma between the two clauses when the result clause comes first.

AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENTS

IF CLAUSE: SIMPLE PAST		RESULT CLAUSE: <i>WOULD</i> + BASE FORM OF VERB
<i>If</i>	he loved her, he were* in love,	he would get married.

*Note that *were* is used for all subjects with *be*.

NEGATIVE STATEMENTS

IF CLAUSE: SIMPLE PAST		RESULT CLAUSE: <i>WOULD</i> + BASE FORM OF VERB
<i>If</i>	he didn't love her, he weren't in love,	he would not get married.

YES/NO QUESTIONS

RESULT CLAUSE	IF CLAUSE	
Would I get married	<i>if</i>	I loved her? I were in love?

SHORT ANSWERS

AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE
Yes, I would.	No, I wouldn't.

WH- QUESTIONS

RESULT CLAUSE	IF CLAUSE	
What would you do	<i>if</i>	you loved her? you were in love?

NOTE: For contractions with *would*, see Appendix 24 on page 346.

EXPRESS CHECK

Circle the correct words to complete this question.

What will / would he do if / when he was / were a millionaire?

Grammar Explanations

Examples

1. Use **present unreal conditional** sentences to talk about unreal, untrue, imagined, or impossible conditions and their results.

The *if* clause presents the unreal condition.
The result clause presents the unreal result of that condition.

if clause *result clause*
■ **If I loved** him, I **would marry** him.
(But I don't love him, so I won't marry him.)

if clause *result clause*
■ **If I had** more time, I **would travel**.
(But I don't have time, so I don't travel.)

2. Use the **simple past tense** in the *if* clause.
Use **would + base form** of the verb in the result clause.

► BE CAREFUL!

- a. The *if* clause uses the simple past tense form, but the meaning is not past.
- b. Don't use **would** in the *if* clause in present unreal conditional sentences.
- c. Use **were** for all subjects when the verb in the *if* clause is a form of **be**.

USAGE NOTE: You will sometimes hear native speakers use **was** in the *if* clause. However, many people think that this is not correct.

if clause *result clause*
■ **If they had** money, they **wouldn't live** there.

■ **If I had** more money **now**, I would take a trip around the world.

■ **If she knew** the answer, she would tell you.
NOT ~~If she would know the answer...~~

■ **If I were** rich, I would travel around the world.
NOT ~~If I was rich...~~

3. You can also use a **modal** in the result clause.

■ If I had time, I **could read** more.

4. You can **begin conditional sentences** with the *if* clause or the result clause. The meaning is the same.

Use a **comma** between the two clauses only when the *if* clause comes first.

■ **If I had more money**, I would move.

OR

■ I would move **if I had more money**.

5. Statements beginning with **If I were you, . . .** are often used to give advice.

■ **If I were you**, I'd read "Peanuts."
It's really funny.

1

TRUE OR FALSE • Read each quotation from these "Peanuts" characters. Write T (True) or F (False) for the statement that follows.

1. **SNOOPY:** If I were a human being, I wouldn't even *own* a dog!
 ___ F ___ Snoopy is a human being.
2. **LUCY to SNOOPY:** You wouldn't be so happy if you knew what was going to happen.
 ___ Snoopy is happy.
3. **LUCY to LINUS:** If I were you, I'd sleep underneath that tree.
 ___ Lucy is giving Linus advice.
4. **SNOOPY to WOODSTOCK:** What would you do if you had forty dollars?
 ___ Woodstock has forty dollars.
5. **SNOOPY:** If I ate one more snowflake, I'd turn into a blizzard.
 ___ Snoopy plans to eat another snowflake.
6. **LUCY:** If we were married, Schroeder, I'd come in every morning and dust your piano.
 ___ Lucy dusts Schroeder's piano.

2

COMPLETE • Read part of an article about the comic strip "Peanuts." Complete it with the correct form of the verbs in parentheses.

Peanuts

What makes "Peanuts" so popular? Of course, if it weren't **1. (not be)** funny, people _____ **2. (not like)** it so much. But "Peanuts" provides more than just laughs. It addresses such universal themes as love, jealousy, loneliness, and hope. If the characters _____ **3. (not be)** so real, we _____ **4. (couldn't / identify)** with them. Take Lucy, for example. In love with the piano-playing Schroeder, Lucy complains, "If we _____ **5. (be)** married, and you _____ **6. (love)** golf, I _____ **7. (hate)** your golf clubs! If you _____ **8. (drive)** a sports car, I _____ **9. (hate)** your sports car! If you _____ **10. (be)** a bowler, I _____ **11. (hate)** your bowling ball." Without looking up from his piano or missing a beat, Schroeder asks, "So?" "I hate your piano!" shouts Lucy as she kicks it out from under him. Recognizable behavior? In "Peanuts" we see ourselves along with our weaknesses and hopes. But we don't have to analyze "Peanuts" to enjoy it. If it _____ **12. (not be)** for comic strips like "Peanuts," our lives _____ **13. (might / be)** a little less fun.

COMBINE • Read about these “Peanuts” characters. What would happen if their situations were different? Combine the two sentences into one, using the unreal present conditional.

1. Schroeder ignores Lucy. She gets angry at him.
If Schroeder didn't ignore Lucy, she wouldn't get angry at him.
2. Schroeder loves Beethoven. He plays his sonatas all the time.
3. Charlie Brown doesn't have enough friends. He feels lonely.
4. Sally doesn't know her teacher's name. She can't send her a card.
5. Linus is smart. He finds clever solutions to life's problems.
6. Woodstock and Snoopy have a close relationship. Woodstock confides in Snoopy.
7. Rerun's parents refuse to let him have a dog. He tries to borrow Charlie's dog.
8. Pigpen doesn't take enough baths. He's filthy.

EDIT • Read this boy's journal entry. Find and correct six mistakes in the use of the present unreal conditional. The first mistake is already corrected.

I've got to stop staying up late reading "Peanuts"! If I weren't always so tired, I ^{would} be able to stay awake in class. Whenever the teacher calls on me, I don't know what to say. Then I get really embarrassed because of that cute red-haired girl that I like. I would talk to her if I wouldn't be so shy. My friend Jason says, "If I was you, I'd ask her to a party," but I'm too afraid that if I asked her she would have said no. After class, I played baseball. Nobody wanted me on their team. If I play better, I would get chosen sometimes. Life is hard! I can really understand that Charlie Brown character in "Peanuts." In fact, if I didn't laugh so hard while reading "Peanuts," I would cried!