

Grammar: Mixed conditionals

4 Look at the examples from the conversation and match them to the descriptions in the box.

- a If I'd identified the problems before they happened, I'd be very popular now.
- b If they'd finished the building on time, there wouldn't have been so many difficulties.
- c If I listed all the problems, we would be here all day.
- d Would you have been as understanding about the problems if you were a busy traveller?

Second, third and mixed conditionals

1 We can use the second conditional to talk about imaginary or unreal situations.

if + past simple, would + base form of the verb

2 We can use the third conditional when we imagine a different past from the reality, and to express criticism or regret.

if + past perfect, would have + past participle

3 We can use mixed conditional 1 to describe the past result of a present or continuing condition.

if + past simple, would have + past participle

4 We can use mixed conditional 2 to describe the present result of a past condition.

if + past perfect, would + base form of the verb

i It is possible to replace *would* with *might* / *could* to show possibility. We can use *should have* to give advice about or criticize a past condition.

>> For more information on second, third and mixed conditionals, see page 168.

5 Identify the type of mixed conditional in these sentences. Why are they used in each situation?

- a If money and time were never a problem, our last three projects would have been a success.
- b The company wouldn't be in financial difficulties now if the CEO had listened to the advice of the project manager.

6 Look at the notes from a report and the sentences below that are related to them. Complete the sentences using the verbs in brackets and mixed conditionals 1 and 2.

- 1 didn't relocate sales to Mumbai → costs not lower now
If we _____ (move) the sales department to Mumbai, we _____ (have) lower costs now.
- 2 last year's sales figures weren't high → global financial situation steadier
Last year's sales figures (possibly) _____ (be) higher if the global financial situation _____ (be) steadier.
- 3 some of sales team speak Mandarin → increase market share in China over last ten years
If some of the sales team _____ (speak) Mandarin, we _____ (increase) our market share in China over the last ten years.
- 4 daily computer problems → replace old IT system
We _____ (not experience) these daily computer problems if the old IT system _____ (replace).
- 5 keep to budget → not pay high bonuses to managers every year
The department _____ (keep) to its budget in 2011 if it _____ (not pay) high bonuses to the managers every year.
- 6 not have current departmental problems → management follow correct procedures
We _____ (not have) these current departmental problems if the management team _____ (follow) correct procedures in the past.

7 Complete these statements using mixed conditionals and then compare your ideas with a partner.

- 1 I would be rich now if I had ...
- 2 I wouldn't be where I am today if I hadn't ...
- 3 If I were a time traveller, I could have ...
- 4 If I hadn't worked last week, I might have ...
- 5 If I had listened to my teachers, ...

Speaking: It could have been different

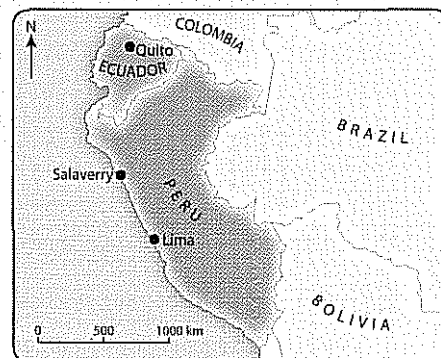
8 2.2 You are part of a team from your company visiting South America to check on construction projects in the region. You are in Quito in Ecuador and are about to leave for Lima in Peru. Listen to the travel update. What is the problem?

9 Work in pairs. Choose one of these options.

Travel by boat to Lima. Turn to File 6, page 114.

Hire a car and drive to Lima. Turn to File 100, page 134.

10 Work with another pair. Tell them about the decisions that you made and why you made them.



TALKING POINT When things go wrong, is it more important to take time to evaluate whether things could have been done differently or is it better to move on quickly and put the problem behind you?

Conditional sentences

Conditional sentences have two or more clauses joined by *if*. There are four main types of conditional sentence: zero conditional, first conditional, second conditional and third conditional.

We can use conditional sentences to talk about situations or events that are generally true or possible (zero or first conditional).

Zero conditional	<i>If I cycle to work, it takes half an hour.</i>
First conditional	<i>The shop will give me a refund if the clothes don't fit.</i>

We can also use conditional sentences to describe imaginary or unreal situations, or to express regret.

Second conditional	<i>They would finish the project sooner if they had better equipment.</i> (they don't have better equipment so they won't finish sooner)
Third conditional	<i>If she'd explained the problem, I would have changed the design.</i> (she didn't explain the problem so I didn't change the design)

We can use modal verbs to replace *would*. For example, we can use *might* / *could* to show possibility, or *should have* to give advice about or criticize a past condition.

*If you hadn't lost the plans, I **might have realized** that the parts were in the wrong place.*

*Someone **should talk** to the project leader if we suspect the team are unhappy.*

The *if*-clause can be used in the first or second part of the sentence. When it comes at the beginning, we usually put a comma between the two clauses.

If the building work is finished on time, our staff will move into the new offices in March.

Our staff will move into the new offices in March if the building work is finished.

Mixed conditionals

Use

In addition to the four types of conditional described in the introduction, we can also use other verb forms in conditional sentences. We can use mixed conditionals to refer, for example, to the past and present at the same time. The main clause and the *if*-clause refer to different time periods. Both types of mixed conditional below refer to unreal or imaginary situations.

1 We can use mixed conditional 1 to describe the past result of a present or continuing condition:

*Our sales **would have been** higher last month if our suppliers **delivered** on schedule.* (the supplier doesn't deliver on schedule and as a result our sales weren't higher in the past)

2 We can use mixed conditional 2 to describe the present result of a past condition:

*If the management team **had agreed** to our terms, the unions **wouldn't be** on strike at the moment.* (the management team did not agree to our terms in the past and the present result is that the unions are on strike)

Form

Mixed conditional 1	
(+) if + past simple, would have + past participle	<i>If they came to the meetings, they would have heard about the change of plan.</i>
(-) One, or both clauses, can be in the negative form.	<i>If they didn't come to the meetings, they wouldn't have heard about the change of plan.</i>
(?) Change the word order.	<i>Would they have heard about the change of plan if they came to the meetings?</i>

Mixed conditional 2	
(+) if + past perfect, would + base form of the verb	<i>If the system had been tested at the beginning, it would work effectively now.</i>
(-) One, or both clauses, can be in the negative form.	<i>If the system hadn't been tested at the beginning, it wouldn't work effectively now.</i>
(?) Change the word order.	<i>Would the system work effectively if it had been tested at the beginning?</i>