

Second Conditional

Look at the image below.

We use the Second Conditional structure to express an impossible situation in the present reality.

For example, Albert (in the picture) and his girlfriend have just broken up. She is angry and doesn't answer Alberto's phone calls.



According to that, we may suppose (only suppose) the following:

If + subject + verb in Past Tense + complement, Subject + would(n't)/could(n't) + base form verb + complement.

If Albert had a chance, he would talk to her.

If she weren't angry, she could answer his phone calls.

If he didn't love her, he wouldn't insist.

Watch out!

In Second Conditional sentences the right form to use the verb *to be* in past tense is only **were(n't)** even with singular subjects, like *she, he, it* and *I*.

Notice that the full sentence is made up of two different ideas, which are separated by a comma. The idea containing the word **if** represents a condition (or necessary situation) for the idea after the comma. In other words, the complete sentence expresses a cause-effect relation, which is only supposed (not real).

If Albert had a chance, he would talk to her.

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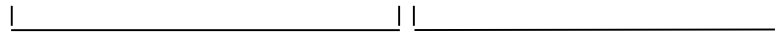
Imaginary condition
(cause)

Imaginary result
(cause)

Second Conditional

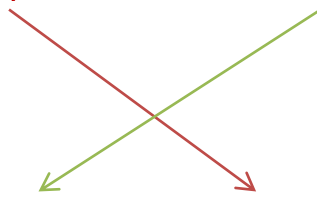
Observe that it is possible to invert the order of these ideas (still inferring the same).

If Albert had a chance, he would talk to her.

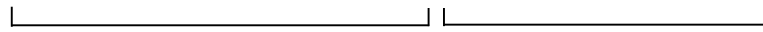


Imaginary condition
(cause)

Imaginary result
(cause)



Albert would talk to her if he had a chance.



Imaginary result
(cause)

Imaginary condition
(cause)