Conditional Sentences

3. The Second Conditional

The second conditional uses the **past simple** after if, then 'would' and the infinitive:

- if + past simple, ...would + infinitive
- ...would + infinitive + if + past simple

(We can use 'were' instead of 'was' with 'I' and 'he/she/it'. This is mostly done in formal writing).

It has two uses.

First, we can use it to talk about things in the future that are probably not going to be true. Maybe I'm imagining some dream for example.

- If I **won** the lottery, I **would buy** a big house.(I probably won't win the lottery)
- If I **met** the Queen of England, I **would say** hello.
- She **would travel** all over the world if she **were** rich.
- She **would pass** the exam if she ever **studied**.(She never studies, so this won't happen)

Second, we can use it to talk about something in the present which is impossible, because it's not true. Is that clear? Have a look at the examples:

- If I **had** his number, I **would call** him. (I don't have his number now, so it's impossible for me to call him).
- If I **were** you, I **wouldn't go** out with that man.

4.   The Third Conditional

We make the third conditional by using the **past perfect** after 'if' and then 'would have' and the **past participle** in the second part of the sentence:

- if + past perfect, ...would + have + past participle
- ...would + have + past participle + if + past perfect

It talks about the past. It's used to describe a situation that didn't happen, and to imagine the result of this situation.

- If she **had studied**, she **would have passed** the exam (but, really we know she didn't study and so she didn't pass)
- If I **hadn't eaten** so much, I **wouldn't have felt** sick (but I did eat a lot, and so I did feel sick).
- If we **had taken** a taxi, we **wouldn't have missed** the plane
- She **wouldn't have been** tired if she **had gone** to bed earlier
- She **would have become** a teacher if she **had gone** to university
- He **would have been** on time for the interview if he **had left** the house at nine