

## THE THIRD CONDITIONAL

### Examples

1. If I **hadn't found** the ski lodge, I **could have been** lost for hours.
2. If you **had been** out there for a long time, you **could have passed out** from cold and hunger.
3. You **could have frozen** your fingers and nose.

### Explanations

1. The first conditional is used when talking about what will happen in the future. The second conditional is used when talking about talking about hypothetical, improbable, impossible, or unreal situations. The third conditional is used when talking about unreal or untrue conditions in the past. It can also be used to criticize past actions.

\*If I **take** ski lessons, I'll **be able to ski** with you. → First

\*If I **were** rich, I **could ski** all year round. → Second

\*If I **had taken** ski lessons, I **could have skied** with you. → Third

\*If you **had told** me sooner, I **would have arranged** for lessons. → Third

2. The **if** clause tells about the unreal or untrue condition. The past perfect tense or the past perfect progressive tense is used in the **if** clause.

\*If I **had taken** ski lessons, I could have skied with you.

(I did not take ski lessons.)

\*If you **had told** me sooner, I would have arranged for some lessons.

(You did not tell me in time.)

\*If I **had been watching** my step, I wouldn't have fallen.

(I wasn't watching my step.)

3. **Would have** or **could have** + past participle is used in the other clause.

\*I **could have skied** with you.

(I didn't because I don't know how to ski.)

\*I know that I **would have enjoyed** myself.

(I didn't because you didn't tell me sooner.)

4. If the condition is understood, it can be omitted.

\*I **could have skied** with you. I know that I **would have enjoyed** myself.

(We know that I don't know how to ski and that I haven't taken lessons.)

**Exercise 7: Speak Your Mind**

*Directions: Complete each sentence with an idea of your own.*

1. If I hadn't learned English, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_, they wouldn't have failed the test.
3. If my parents hadn't met, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_, the team would have won.
5. If dinosaurs hadn't become extinct, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_, I could have reserved a ticket for you.
7. If Alicia hadn't looked before she crossed the street, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_, I could never have finished this work in time.

**Exercise 8: If Only**

*Directions: Complete each sentence. Use the third conditional.*

1. Sammy wouldn't have broken his leg \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
2. If I'd been at the office yesterday, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Our team would have won the game \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ you wouldn't have gotten sick.