

MIXED CONDITIONAL SENTENCES (self-study)

It is possible for the two parts of a conditional sentence to refer to different times, and the resulting sentence is a "mixed conditional" sentence. There are two types of mixed conditional sentence:

A. Present result of past condition:

1. Form

The tense in the 'if' clause is the past perfect, and the tense in the main clause is the present conditional:

'IF' CLAUSE	MAIN CLAUSE
If + past perfect If I had worked harder at school If we had looked at the map	Present conditional I would have a better job now. we wouldn't be lost.

2. Function

In these sentences, the time is **past** in the 'if' clause, and **present** in the main clause. They refer to an **unreal past condition** and its **probable result** in the **present**. They express a situation which is **contrary to reality** both in the past and in the present:

'If I had worked harder at school' is contrary to past fact - I didn't work hard at school, and 'I would have a better job now' is contrary to present fact - I haven't got a good job.

'If we had looked at the map (we didn't), we wouldn't be lost (we are lost).

Examples:

- I **would be** a millionaire now if I **had taken** that job.
- If **you'd caught** that plane **you'd be dead** now.
- If **you hadn't spent** all your money on CDs, you **wouldn't be broke**.

B. Past result of present or continuing condition.

1. Form

The tense in the **If**-clause is the simple past, and the tense in the main clause is the perfect conditional:

'IF' CLAUSE	MAIN CLAUSE
If + simple past If I wasn't afraid of spiders If we didn't trust him	Perfect conditional I would have picked it up. we would have sacked him months ago.

2. Function

In these sentences the time in the **If**-clause is **now or always**, and the time in the main clause is **before now**. They refer to an unreal present situation and its probable (but unreal) past result:

- 'If I wasn't afraid of spiders' is contrary to **present** reality - I **am** afraid of spiders, and 'I would have picked it up' is contrary to **past** reality - I **didn't** pick it up.
- 'If we didn't trust him' is contrary to **present** reality - we **do** trust him, and 'we would have sacked him' is contrary to **past** reality - we **haven't** sacked him.

Examples:

- a. If she **wasn't afraid** of flying she **wouldn't have travelled** by boat.
- b. **I'd have been able** to translate the letter if my Italian **was better**.
- c. If I **was** a good cook, **I'd have invited** them to lunch.
- d. If the elephant **wasn't** in love with the mouse, **she'd have trodden** on him by now.

Useful link for self-study: <http://www.helpforenglish.cz/cz/gramatika/vedlejsi-vety/podminkove/c2007051002-Smisene-kondicionaly--mixed-conditionals-.html>