

The Second Conditional

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

if + past simple, ... would + infinitive

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

It has two uses:

1. 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).
2. 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.

How is this different from the first conditional?

This kind of conditional sentence is different from the first conditional because this is a lot more unlikely.

For example (**second conditional**):

- "If I had enough money, I would buy a house with twenty bedrooms and a swimming pool." (I'm probably not going to have this much money, it's just a dream, not very real.)

But (**first conditional**):

- "If I have enough money, I'll buy some new shoes." (It's much more likely that I'll have enough money to buy some shoes.)