



Lesson 19

The Use of If I do ... and If I did ...

I. RULES AND EXAMPLES

1. Compare these examples:

- a. Lisa has lost her watch. She tell Sue:

LISA: I've lost my watch. Have you seen it anywhere?

SUE: No, but **if I find** it, I'll tell

In this example, Sue feels there is a real possibility that she will find the watch. So she says: **if I find ... , I'll ...**

- b. Joe says:

If **I found** a wallet in the street, I'd take it to the police station.

This is a different type of situation. Here, Joe does not expect to find a wallet in the street; he is imagining a situation that will probably not happen. So he says: **if I found ... , I'd (= I would) ... (not if I find ... , I'll ...)**

When you imagine something like this, you use **if + past (if I found / if there was / if we didn't etc.)**.

But the meaning is *not* past:

Examples:

1. What would you do **if** you **won** a million pounds?
(we don't really expect this to happen)
2. I don't really want to go to their party, but I probably will go.
They'd be upset **if I didn't** go.
3. **If** there **was** (*or were*) an election tomorrow, who would you vote for?

2. We do not normally use **would** in the **if**-part of the sentence:

Examples:

1. I'd be very frightened **if** somebody **pointed** a gun at me. (*not if somebody would point*)
2. **If I didn't** go to their party, they'd be upset. (*not If I wouldn't go*)

But you can use **if ... would** when you ask somebody to do something:

Example: (*from a formal letter*) I would be grateful **if you would let** me know your decision as soon as possible.

3. In the other part of the sentence (not the **if**-part) we use **would** ('d) / **wouldn't**:

Examples:

1. If you took more exercises, you'd (= you **would**) feel better.
2. I'm not tired. If I went to bed now, **I wouldn't sleep**.
3. **Would** you **mind** if I used your phone?

Could and **might** are also possible:

Examples:

1. If you took more exercise, you **might feel** better. (= it is possible that you would feel better)
2. If it stopped raining, we **could go** out. (= we would be able to go out)

4. Do not use **when** in sentence like those on this page:

Examples:

1. They'd be upset **if** I didn't go to their party. (*not when I didn't go*)
2. What would you do **if** you were bitten by a snake? (*not when you were bitten*)

II. EXERCISES

Put the verb into the correct form.

Example: They would be offended if I _____ to their party. (*not / go*)

Answer : They would be offended if I **didn't go** to their party.

Example: If you took more exercise, you _____ better. (feel)

Answer : If you took more exercise, you **would feel** better.

Start here:

1. If they offered me the job, I think I _____ it. (take)
2. A lot of people would be out of work if the car factory _____ . (close down)
3. If I sold my car, I _____ much money for it. (not / get)
4. (in a lift) What would happen if somebody _____ that red button? (press)
5. I don't think there's any chance that Gary and Emma will get married. I'd be absolutely astonished if they _____ . (do)
6. Liz gave me this ring. She _____ very upset if I lose it. (be)
7. Dave and Kate are expecting us. They would be very disappointed if we _____ . (not / come)
8. Would Steve mind if I _____ his bike without asking him? (borrow)
9. What would you do if somebody _____ in here with a gun? (walk)
10. I'm sure Sue _____ if you explained the situation to her. (understand)

Answer the question in the way shown.

Example: A: Shall we catch the 10:30 train?

B: No. (arrive too early)

Answer : B: No. If we caught the 10:30 train, we'd arrive too early.

Start here:

1. A: Is Kevin going to take his driving test?
B: No. (fail) If he _____.
2. A: Why don't we stay at a hotel?
B: No. (cost too much) If _____.
3. A: Is Sally going to apply for the job?
B: No. (not / get it) If _____.
4. A: Let's tell them the truth.
B: No. (not / believe us) If _____.
5. A: Why don't we invite Bill to the party?
B: No. (have to invite his friends too) _____.

III. WRITING

You ask a friend to imagine these situations. You ask **What would you do if ...?** Write your answers.

Example: (imagine – you win a lot of money) _____.

Answer : What would you do if you won a lot of money?

Start here:

1. (imagine – you lose your passport)
What _____?
2. (imagine – there's a fire in the building)
_____.
3. (imagine – you're in a lift and it stops between floors)
_____.
4. (imagine – there's an earthquake)
Who _____?
5. (imagine – you got lost in a foreign country)
What _____?

Use your own ideas to complete these sentences.

Example: If you took more exercise, _____.

Answer : If you took more exercise, you'd feel better.

Start here:

1. I'd be very angry if _____.
2. If I didn't go to work tomorrow, _____.
3. Would you go the party if _____.
4. If you bought some new clothes, _____.
5. Would you mind if _____.

IV. FREE TALKING

Give instructions on the following:

1. How to make a paper airplane or paper boat.
2. How to get a discount in an expensive item.
3. How to make someone fall in love with you.



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