

WHAT IS **CONDITIONAL**?

The conditional is a form of verb being used when talking about things that could happen under certain conditions, or those that are not guaranteed to happen but may occur given a certain set of circumstances.

CONDITIONAL IN ENGLISH

In English we simply use the modal verb "**would**" or its shortened form '**d**', and then we add the main verb after it.

Here are a couple of examples:

I would help him with his homework if he asked.
You'd be shocked if you knew.

CONDITIONAL IN FRENCH

In French however, it is a lot more than that. There is a whole set of different rules for different kinds of verbs. BUT – if you are already familiar with how to form the FUTURE TENSE, it will be so much easier to follow.

USES OF THE CONDITIONAL

- In asking politely or formally, especially in public settings.
(Example: I would like a cup of coffee, please.)
- In saying what you would like or need.
(Example: I would like to take a tour of the place.)
- In making a suggestion.
(Example: I could come over and cheer you up.)
- In giving an advice to someone.
(Example: You should tell him you're sorry.)
- In playing roles, imaginary or not.
(Example: I would be the doctor and you would be the nurse.)
- In soft nagging or complaining.
(Example: You could clean your room instead of sleeping around all day.)
- In “even if” or “in case of” clauses.
(Examples: Even if he would sleep all day, he'd still get good grades.
In case of any problems, you would call me, right?)

BASIC RULES ON HOW TO FORM THE CONDITIONAL

- Most verbs in the conditional form follow this format: the infinitive (used as the stem) + an ending similar to that of the endings for the imperfect tense: **-ais, -ais, -ait, -ions, -iez, and -aient**.
- It is formed with a stem (which is basically similar to the one being used as a future stem in FUTURE TENSES) combined with an ending that is dependent on the subject (whether it is about **je, tu, elle, on, nous, vous, ils, or elles**.)
- To put it simply, FUTURE STEM + IMPERFECT TENSE ENDING equals a conditional form.
- There is no direct counterpart in French to the word would. Instead, the verb ending is changed to turn it into a one-word version of the English conditional phrase.

Rules for Regular Verbs with **-er** and **-ir** endings in the conditional

The rule in conjugating regular verbs to form a conditional is similar to that of the rules for the future tense. Basically, you use the same stem for future tense and just add the appropriate endings.

Examples:

appeler (to call) becomes appellerais, appellerais, appelleraït, appelleraïons, appelleraïez, appelleraïent

Jeter (to throw) becomes jetterais, jetterais, jetterait, jetterions, jetteriez, jetteraient

For verbs that end in -yer, the y often becomes i when used in the future tense.

For example:

nettoyer (to clean) becomes nettoierais, nettoierais, nettoierait, nettoierions, nettoieriez, nettoieraient

Rules for **Irregular Verbs** in the conditional

The verbs with irregular stems in the future tense are the very same irregular verbs in conditional. So if you are already familiar with that topic, this is way too easy for you already.

Some examples of the irregular verbs that have irregular stems in both future and conditional are the following: **avoir, être, faire, aller, devoir, pouvoir, savoir, tenir, venir, voir, vouloir.**

The verb **avoir** becomes *aurais, aurais, aurait, aurions, auriez, auraient*

The verb **être** becomes *serais, serais, serait, serions, seriez, seraient*

The verb **faire** becomes *ferais, ferais, ferait, ferions, feriez, feraient*

The verb **aller** becomes *irais, irais, irait, irions, iriez, iraient*

To say it simply, even if these verbs are irregular, they still conform to the pattern by using the same endings as the regular verbs.