

Reading Comprehension

The Train I Didn't Take

I was supposed to meet a friend at the station, but I missed my train. It wasn't a big deal—until I found out later that he had introduced someone else to a project I had shown interest in.

If I hadn't stopped for that coffee, I might have been the one on that train. And if I had made it on time, who knows? Maybe I'd be running that startup now.

I still keep in touch with them, and they're doing incredibly well. I'm not bitter—but I can't help wondering what might have happened.

If I were part of that team now, I'd be in a completely different place in life. Maybe it's better this way, but I'll never know. That one missed train might have changed everything.

Questions:

1. Why did the narrator miss the train?
2. What opportunity did they miss because of it?
3. How do they feel about the situation now?

Vocabulary Exercise

Match the word to its meaning:

1. startup
2. regret
3. miss out on
4. keep in touch
5. run (a company)
6. who knows?

Definitions:

- a) Stay in contact
- b) A new business venture
- c) Be in charge of something
- d) To feel bad about a past decision
- e) To not experience or take advantage of something
- f) Anything could happen – it's uncertain

1. __

2. __

3. __

4. __

5. __

6. __

Grammar Point: Mixed Conditionals

- ◆ What are Mixed Conditionals?

Mixed conditionals are conditional sentences where the two clauses refer to different times (usually a mix of past and present). They are used to talk about **how past actions could affect the present, or how present situations could have affected the past**.

- ◆ Type 1: Past → Present Result

Used when a **past action didn't happen**, and as a result, something **isn't true now**.

Structure:

If + **past perfect**, would + base verb

Examples:

- If I **had gone** to university, I **would have** a better job now.
- If she **had taken** the flight, she **would be** in London now.
- If we **had moved** abroad, we **would live** by the sea.

◆ Type 2: Present → Past Result

Used when a present/unreal situation would have changed something in the past.

Structure:

If + **past simple**, would **have** + **past participle**

Examples:

- If I **were** more confident, I **would have spoken** at the event.
- If he **didn't fear** failure, he **would have launched** the project.
- If they **were** richer, they **would have bought** the house.

💡 Grammar Practice

A. Complete with mixed conditionals:

1. If I _____ (not miss) that interview, I _____ (work) for Google now.
2. If she _____ (know) how hard it was, she _____ (not start) the business.
3. If he _____ (be) more confident, he _____ (speak) at the meeting.
4. If they _____ (not move) abroad, we _____ (still be) in touch.
5. If you _____ (study) medicine, you _____ (be) a doctor today.

B. Write your own sentences using these cues:

1. Miss an opportunity → now regret
2. Take a different job → now live somewhere else
3. Not learn English → miss an important chance