

Real Promises, Imagined Fixes

By the end of this session you can make real promises with the first conditional, imagine changes with the second — and choose the right one.

01 READ FIRST

12 MIN

A real Monday at Tierra Nueva, one of the Meridian schools. Read the story. Look at the highlighted sentences — you will use them in sections 02 and 03.

Monday morning at Tierra Nueva

It is 8:15 on Monday morning, in the second week of term. Lucía Herrera works in the front office at Tierra Nueva, one of the schools in the Meridian network. The phone is already ringing.

"Good morning, Tierra Nueva. Lucía speaking."

"Hello, this is Mrs. Ortega. My son Diego started last week, and I still don't know which bus he takes. I sent an email on Thursday. Nobody answered."

Lucía checks the inbox. The email is there. Nobody opened it.

"I'm really sorry, Mrs. Ortega. Transport is managed by Mr. Ríos. **If I call him now, I'll have an answer for you before ten.**"

"Before ten? Diego leaves the house at seven tomorrow."

"I understand. **If he doesn't answer, I'll go to his office myself.** You'll hear from me either way."

At 9:40, Lucía calls back. Diego takes Bus 4, and it stops two streets from their house. Mrs. Ortega is happy, but she has one more comment. "Thank you. But honestly, **if this school answered emails faster, parents like me would worry a lot less.**"

Later, Lucía talks to her manager, Andrés. "That's the third call about transport this week. **If we had one person for new families, these problems wouldn't happen.**"

Andrés agrees, but there is no budget this year. "**If I had the money, I would hire someone tomorrow.** But I don't. So what can we do now?"

Lucía thinks for a moment. "**If you give me the transport list, I'll answer those questions myself.**"

"OK," says Andrés. "**If it works, we'll make it the standard for every Meridian school.**"

Lucía smiles. She can't change the budget — but she can change Monday.

1.1 Reading comprehension

Choose one answer.

1 Why does Mrs. Ortega call?

- ☐ Diego is sick. ☐ She doesn't know which bus Diego takes. ☐ She wants to change schools.

2 What happened to her email?

- ☐ Lucía answered it. ☐ Mr. Ríos deleted it. ☐ Nobody opened it.

3 What does Lucía promise?

- ☐ To call back before ten. ☐ To drive Diego to school. ☐ To change the bus route.

4 Why doesn't Andrés hire a person for new families?

- ☐ Nobody wants the job. ☐ There is no budget this year. ☐ Lucía doesn't want help.

5 Andrés says: "If I had the money, I would hire someone tomorrow." What does he mean?

- ☐ He has the money, and he will hire someone. ☐ He doesn't have the money, so he can't hire anyone now.
☐ He will get the money tomorrow.

02 TWO CONDITIONALS

20 MIN

First conditional

Real and possible. Plans, promises, results.

If + present simple, will / won't + verb

If I **call** him now, I'll **have** an answer before ten.

If he **doesn't answer**, I'll **go** to his office.

No will after if: ~~if I will call him~~ → If I call him

Second conditional

Imagined. Not true now, or not likely.

If + past simple, would / wouldn't + verb

If I **had** the money, I **would hire** someone.

If we **had** one person for new families, these problems **wouldn't happen**.

No would after if: ~~if I would have~~ → If I had • With be: If I were...

→ The if part can go first or second. When it goes first, use a comma: *If it works, we'll make it the standard.* / *We'll make it the standard if it works.*

2.1 First conditional — real promises

Write the correct form of the verb. Use contractions or full forms.

1 If Mr. Ríos _____ (answer) the phone, Lucía will call Mrs. Ortega back.

2 If Lucía calls him now, she _____ (have) an answer before ten.

3 If the email _____ (not / arrive), I'll send it again.

4 We _____ (not / lose) families if we answer every email in one day.

5 If you send me the list by Monday, I _____ (confirm) the buses by Wednesday.

6 If the bus _____ (be) late again, Mrs. Ortega will complain to the campus head.

7 Andrés _____ (make) it the standard if it works.

8 If Diego _____ (miss) the bus tomorrow, his mother will call the office.

2.2 Second conditional — imagined fixes

Write the correct form of the verb. Use contractions or full forms.

- 1 If we _____ (have) one person for new families, these problems wouldn't happen.
- 2 If Andrés had more money, he _____ (hire) a new receptionist.
- 3 If I _____ (be) the campus head, I would answer every email myself.
- 4 Parents _____ (worry) less if the school answered emails faster.
- 5 If the office _____ (open) at 7:00, parents would call before work.
- 6 If we didn't have so many emails, we _____ (not / be) so slow.
- 7 If Lucía _____ (not / work) here, nobody would check the inbox.
- 8 What _____ (you / do) if a parent shouted at you?

03 REAL OR IMAGINED?

15 MIN

Read the situation. Is it real and possible, or imagined? Tick 1st or 2nd, then write both verbs in the correct form.

- The meeting with the campus head is on Friday. It's in the calendar.*
- 1 If the campus head _____ (agree), we _____ (start) the new standard in May. ☐ 1st · real ☐ 2nd · imagined
 - 2 *Tierra Nueva has only one receptionist, and there is no budget for another one.*
If we _____ (have) two receptionists, we _____ (answer) every call. ☐ 1st · real ☐ 2nd · imagined
 - 3 *Mrs. Ortega is waiting for a call. Lucía promised to call before ten.*
If Lucía _____ (not / call) before ten, Mrs. Ortega _____ (be) angry. ☐ 1st · real ☐ 2nd · imagined
 - 4 *Andrés is not the director. He can't change the fees.*
If Andrés _____ (be) the director, he _____ (change) the fees. ☐ 1st · real ☐ 2nd · imagined
 - 5 *The transport list arrives tomorrow morning.*
If the list _____ (arrive) tomorrow, I _____ (send) it to all new families. ☐ 1st · real ☐ 2nd · imagined
 - 6 *Tierra Nueva is a small school with only 200 students.*
If Tierra Nueva _____ (be) a big school, it _____ (need) a call centre. ☐ 1st · real ☐ 2nd · imagined
 - 7 *Three new families only speak Korean. Lucía doesn't speak Korean.*
If Lucía _____ (speak) Korean, she _____ (help) them herself. ☐ 1st · real ☐ 2nd · imagined
 - 8 *There is a parents' meeting on Thursday, and the forecast says it may rain.*
If it _____ (rain) on Thursday, we _____ (move) the meeting inside. ☐ 1st · real ☐ 2nd · imagined