59 The second conditional

FORM

if + past simple	***would/could/might*** + infinitive
If T lived by the sea,	I would do a lot of swimming.
If they asked me to work for them.	I might accept.
or ***would/could/might*** + infinitive	*if* + past simple
I would do a lot of swimming	if I lived by the sea.
i might accept	if they asked me to work for them.

Notes

- The 'past' here is actually the subjunctive, which is the same as the past simple except for **two** forms - ***I*** and ***he/she*** + ***were:***
  If I were you, I'd change my job.
  If John were here, he wouldn't be very happy.
- In conventional English, these two forms can be replaced by the past:
  If I was you, I'd change my job.
  If John was here, he wouldn't be very happy.
- *would* is often shortened to *'d.*

USE

- The second conditional refers to the present or future.
  The *if-event* is cither
  a] hypothetical;
  If I worked in that factory, I'd soon change things, (but I don't work in that factory)
  If I spoke French, my job would be a lot easier, (but I don't speak French)
  b) unlikely:
  If she left her husband, she might be happier, (but T don't think she's going to leave her husband)

Practice

Write these sentences, putting the verbs in brackets into the correct tense.

1 If you drove more carefully, you (not have) so many accidents.
If you drove more carefully, you wouldn't have so many accidents.

2 If he (get up) earlier, he'd get to work on time.
If he got up earlier, he'd get to work on time.

3 If we (have) more time, I could tell you more about it.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

4 If you (sell) more products, you'd earn more money.

5 I could help you if you (trust) me more.

6 His car would be a lot safer if he (buyj some new tyres.

7 The children would be better swimmers if they (go) swimming more frequently.

8 I wouldn't mind having children if we (live) in the country.

9 If I (be) you, I wouldn't worry about going to university.

10 If I (have) any money, I'd give you some.

11 Your parents (be) a lot happier if you phoned them more often.

12 Where would you like to live if you (not live) in Paris?

13 What would you do if you suddenly (win) half a million pounds?

14 Would you mind if I (not give) you the money I owe you today?

15 If I had to go to hospital, (not go) to this one.

LIVEWORKSHEETS