

You know that English has four common IF structures, but did you know that there are mixed ones, too?

If I wasn't sure,...

...he would have gone.

If she didn't see,...

If we hadn't looked it up,...

...we wouldn't be so happy.

If we had seen it, ...



(It may help to remember that the subjunctive mostly – but not completely – has been replaced by the indicative past tenses.)

1. There are two common mixed IFs. **Mixed If n. 1** has as its premise something that didn't happen in the past, and uses it to talk about probable or unreal results in the present. It's like mixing the IF part of If n. 3 with the non-IF part of If n. 2: If + past perfect, present conditional, ex., If we had looked at the map, we wouldn't be lost, now. **CLICK ON, DRAG, and DROP** these bits onto the right lines:

had read would speak it might be had studied had crashed

If they (a) English harder in school, they (b) better, now.

If you (c) his car, you (d) in trouble, now. (NO MATCH:)

2. **Mixed If n. 2** is the *reverse* of mixed If n. 1. N. 2 has as its premise something that is unreal in the present, and uses it to talk about probable or unreal results in the past. It's like mixing the IF part of If n. 2 with the non-IF part of If n. 3: If + simple past, perfect conditional, ex., If I weren't* afraid of spiders, I would have picked it up, myself. **CLICK ON, DRAG, and DROP** these bits onto the right lines:

would have been wasn't could have been didn't would have fired

If we (a) trust him, we (b) him, months ago.

If I (c) in a meeting, I (d) happy to help you. (NO MATCH:)

*Just as is true for the commonly used If n. 2, AmE distances the feeling even farther by using the plural for all voices, even if they are singular. BrE can use the singular for singular voices, ex., If I wasn't afraid

.....



A chart of these two common MIXED types of IF could look like this:

MIXED N. 1:	If + unreal past,...	...probable / unreal results in the present
	(If n. 3) <i>past perfect (had + p.p. / past participle)</i>	... (If n. 2) <i>present conditional (would/et al. + p.p.)</i>
MIXED N. 2:	If + unreal present,...	...probable / unreal past
	(If n. 2) <i>simple past (-ed or irregular),...</i>	...(If n. 3) <i>perfect conditional (would've/... + p.p.)</i>

3. Let's practice a bit more with mixed Ifs n. 1 (you can look back, if you need to...but try not to!), TICK:

- a.) If you had given | gave me the password, earlier, we wouldn't be | wouldn't have been in this mess, now!
- b.) We could have found | could find the right street, now, if you hadn't thrown | threw away the directions!

4. Let's practice a bit more with mixed Ifs n. 2 (you can look back, if you need to...but try not to!), TICK:

- a.) I could have continued | could continue to sleep for hours, if you weren't | hadn't been there to wake me up.
- b.) If they came | had come, we wouldn't have had | wouldn't have so many problems!



5. Right or wrong? TICK the right answer, YES or NO:

- a.) For an unreal *past* + probable / unreal *present*, is this sentence right? YES | NO
--If the fence weren't so tall, he would have jumped over it, easily.
- b.) For an unreal *present* + probable / unreal *past*, is this sentence right? YES | NO
--If that horse had cleared the last hurdle, it would win the competition.
- c.) For an unreal *present* + probable / unreal *past*, is this sentence right? YES | NO
--If the book were shorter, I would have finished it by now.

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