

Would: Imaginary Situations & Past of Will

INTERMEDIATE

Focus: Hypothetical scenarios, Present and future reference, Contracted forms ('d / wouldn't), Reported speech, Past promises, Future in the past, Would vs. Will, Present imaginary vs. Past imaginary, If-clause integration

1. Imaginary Situations (Hypotheticals)

We use **would** to talk about situations that are imagined, hypothetical, or unlikely to happen in the present or future. This is often used in the result part of a Second Conditional sentence.

- **Structure:** Subject + would + infinitive (without to)
- **Contraction:** I would = I'd, She would = She'd, They would = They'd.
- **Negative:** would not = wouldn't.

Examples:

- It **would be** nice to buy a new car, but we can't afford it. (Imaginary situation)
- I **wouldn't do** that if I were you. (Negative advice)
- If I had more time, I **'d travel** the world.

2. Would as the Past of "Will" (Future in the Past)

We use **would** as the past form of **will**. This is very common in:

1. **Reported Speech:** When reporting what someone said in the past about the future.
2. **Past Thoughts/Promises:** Describing a past belief about the future.

Direct Speech / Original Thought	Reported Speech / Past Perspective
Tom: "I will call you later."	Tom said he would call me later.
Amy: "It won't rain."	Amy thought it wouldn't rain.
Promise: "I will help you."	She promised she would help me.

3. Forming Questions

To ask about imaginary situations, we invert the subject and **would**.

- **Yes/No Question:** **Would** you **live** in a big city?
- **Wh- Question:** What **would** you **do** if you won the lottery?

4. Comparison: Will vs. Would

- **Will:** Use for real, definite future plans or predictions.
 - I **will** go to the store later. (Real plan)

Practice Exercises

Instruction: Complete the sentences using the correct form of the verb (**would** + verb). Pay close attention to the cues for negatives (not/verb) and questions (subject/verb).

1. If I had a million dollars, I _____ (buy) a house on the beach.
2. She promised that she _____ (not/tell) anyone my secret.
3. What _____ (you/do) if you lost your passport?
4. I thought the exam _____ (be) difficult, but it was actually quite easy.
5. It _____ (not/be) a good idea to leave the door unlocked at night.
6. He said he _____ (arrive) by 8:00 PM, but he was late.
7. _____ (you/like) to join us for dinner tonight?
8. Even if they invited me, I _____ (not/go) to their party.
9. I knew that John _____ (help) us if we asked him.
10. Where _____ (she/live) if she could live anywhere in the world?
11. The weather forecast said it _____ (rain) all day yesterday.
12. I _____ (love) to learn how to play the guitar one day.
13. They were sure that they _____ (not/finish) the project on time.
14. Who _____ (you/call) in an emergency?
15. That car is too expensive; I _____ (not/pay) that much for it.

Answer Key

1. **would buy / 'd buy** (Imaginary situation)
2. **wouldn't tell** (Past of will / Reported promise - negative)
3. **would you do** (Question - Imaginary)
4. **would be** (Past of will / Future in the past)
5. **wouldn't be** (Imaginary/Advice - negative)
6. **would arrive** (Reported speech / Past of will)
7. **Would you like** (Question - Polite offer/Hypothetical)
8. **wouldn't go** (Imaginary situation - negative)
9. **would help** (Past of will / Belief in the past)
10. **would she live** (Question - Imaginary)
11. **would rain** (Reported speech / Past of will)
12. **would love / 'd love** (Imaginary desire)
13. **wouldn't finish** (Past of will / Past belief - negative)
14. **would you call** (Question - Hypothetical)
15. **wouldn't pay** (Hypothetical - negative)