The third conditional

The third conditional is a grammatical structure used to talk about **unreal or hypothetical situations in the past**. It's often used to express regrets, wishes, and situations that are contrary to reality. The third conditional is formed using the past perfect tense in the "if" clause and the modal verb "would" plus the present perfect tense of the main verb in the main clause.

Form: If + Subject + Past Perfect, Subject + Would + Have + Past Participle

Usage:
The third conditional is used to describe situations that did not happen in the past, and therefore, the outcome is purely hypothetical. It's used to **express regret** or to **speculate about things that could have been different if a different action had been taken in the past**.

Examples:
- If I had studied harder, I would have passed the exam. **(regret)**
- If she had known, she would have come to the party. **(unreal past situation)**
- If they had arrived on time, they would have caught the train. **(missed opportunity)**
- If he had listened, he would have understood. **(not listening led to misunderstanding)**
- If it hadn't rained, we would have gone for a picnic. **(changed plans due to rain)**

Notes:
- In the "if" clause, you use the past perfect tense of the verb.
- In the main clause, you use "would have" followed by the past participle of the verb.
- The contracted form "I'd," "you'd," etc., can be used instead of "would have" for a more informal tone.

Variations: The third conditional can also use other modal verbs like **"could have," "might have,"** or **"should have"** in the main clause to express different degrees of possibility or regret.

Examples:
- If I had studied harder, I could have passed the exam. **(possibility)**
- If she had known, she might have come to the party. **(possibility)**
- If they had arrived on time, they would have caught the train. **(regret)**

Remember!
The third conditional is used to talk about unreal or hypothetical situations in the past. It's a way to discuss regrets, missed opportunities, and things that could have been different if the past had been different.



The third conditional exercise 1:

Choose the correct answer.

1. She ____ her keys if she had put them in the usual place.
a) wouldn't lose
b) wouldn't have lost
c) won't lose

2. If you ____ for directions, you wouldn't have gotten lost.
a) asked
b) would ask
c) had asked

3. If she ____ the job offer, she would be working in a different city now.
a) accepted
b) would accept
c) had accepted

4. If you ____ earlier, you wouldn't have missed the sunrise.
a) had woken up
b) would wake up
c) woke up

5. If she ____ the lottery, she would have bought a new car.
a) won
b) would win
c) had won

6. If you _____ earlier, you wouldn't have missed the train.
a) leave
b) had left
c) left

7. If she _____ the umbrella, she wouldn't have gotten wet.
a) had brought
b) brings
c) brought

8. If they had missed their flight, they _____ the wedding.
a) would missed
b) would have missed
c) missed

9. He _____ his job if he had been more responsible.
a) wouldn't have lost
b) wouldn't lose
c) had lost

10. We _____ lost if we had taken the map.
a) wouldn't have get
b) wouldn't have got
c) won't have got

The third conditional exercise 2:

Complete the sentences with the third conditional form of the verb in brackets.

1. He _____ **(have)** more money if he had invested wisely.

2. If I _____ **(find)** my passport, I would have travelled abroad.

3. They _____ **(celebrate)** their anniversary if they had remembered the date.

4. If they had practiced more, they _____ **(perform)** better on stage.

5. If he _____ **(be)** more careful, he wouldn't have broken the vase.



6. If they _____ **(drive)** more carefully, they wouldn't have crashed the car.

7. We _____ **(enjoy)** the trip if the weather had been better.

8. If he _____ **(listen)** to advice, he wouldn't have been in that situation.

9. She _____ **(not forget)** her lines if she had rehearsed more.

10. We _____ **(not meet)** if we hadn't worked together.

The third conditional: answer key

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Where two or more answers are given, any of them is correct.

Exercise 1

1. b) wouldn't have lost
2. c) had asked
3. c) had accepted
4. a) had woken up
5. c) had won
6. b) had left
7. a) had brought
8. b) would have missed
9. a) wouldn't have lost
10. b) wouldn't have got

Exercise 2

1. would have had
2. had found
3. would have celebrated
4. would have performed
5. had been
6. had driven / had been driving
7. would have enjoyed
8. had listened
9. would not have forgotten / wouldn't have forgotten
10. would not have met / wouldn't have met

Corrections to the printed pages

Explanation: the main clause is would + have + past participle, and I'd stands for I would (I'd have gone).