

# Learn**English** Teens

### **Grammar videos: Third conditional**



Remember to watch the video first! Then read the conversation between Sophie and Mei, a student that Sophie met on her travels. Sophie's helping Mei understand how to use future forms.





We use the third conditional (if + past perfect, would + have + past participle) to talk about something in the past that did not happen.



How is the third conditional different from the other conditionals?

Mei

This is the way we imagine how things could have been different in the past. If something had been different, something else would have happened. Notice that both the condition and the result are impossible now.

If I'd known, I would have worn something nicer.

In this case, Amy didn't know about the party so she didn't wear special clothes.



OK, so the bit after if is different to what really happened?

Yes, then the next clause is imagining the result in the past, which didn't happen, of course. The *if* clause can be at the beginning or at the end of the sentence.



So Alfie didn't remember because Ollie didn't tell him.



Exactly. We can use negatives to talk about things that did happen in the past.

He wouldn't have missed the bus if he hadn't overslept.

So he overslept and he missed the bus.

Yes. When you're using this kind of conditional be careful with the contractions. We use 'd for would and had.

If I'd seen him, I'd have asked him to come over. (had, would)



Sophie

#### www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglishteens

© The British Council, 2012 The United Kingdom's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. We are registered in England as a charity.



# Learn**English** Teens

### **Grammar videos: Third conditional**

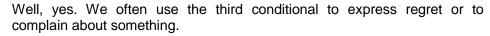
Can you use other verbs apart from would?



Yes, we also use could or might.

If they'd told me, I might have been able to help.

These sentences all seem a bit negative.



It would've been even better if Alfie hadn't ruined it!





If I'd known about the third conditional before, I wouldn't have failed my English test!

Watch the video on our website!

