

Grammar Conditionals

Express Regret and Relief with Third Conditional 1

Third Conditional – **If + past perfect, would / could / might + have + past participle** – is often used to talk about the feelings of **regret** and **relief**. Remember that the if-clause is hypothetical – it did not happen. Therefore:

We express **regret** when the result clause has a **positive** meaning – i.e. something positive did not happen:

If I had bought that new dress, I would have looked great. BUT I didn't..., so I didn't look great. = 😞

We express **relief** when the result clause has a **negative** meaning – i.e. something negative did not happen:

If I had bought that new dress, I would have looked awful. BUT I didn't..., so I didn't look awful. = 😊

(Note – it doesn't matter whether the result clause has a positive or negative verb form.)

In each question below, say whether the first sentence expresses **regret** or **relief**, then write a sentence from the prompts with the opposite sentiment. Finally, write a new sentence with the if-clause and mark it regret or relief:

1. a) If the plane had taken off on time, I wouldn't have been late for my meeting. r _____
b) If the plane had taken off on time, not / have / time / browse / duty-free / shops. r _____

- c) If the plane had taken off on time, _____. r _____

2. a) If I had bought flowers for Alex, she would have been angry, because she is allergic to pollen. r _____
b) If I had bought flowers for Alex, go out / me. r _____

- c) If I had bought flowers for Alex, _____. r _____

3. a) I wouldn't have had so much fun if I'd worked harder at school. r _____
b) become / doctor if I'd worked harder at school. r _____

- c) _____ if I'd worked harder at school. r _____

4. a) If I had trained as a masseur, I could have had my own practice. r _____
b) If I had trained as a masseur, work / be / really / boring. r _____

- c) If I had trained as a masseur, _____. r _____

5. a) I would have been able to see their new baby if I'd visited my cousin. r _____
b) be / late / Zumba / class if I'd visited my cousin. r _____

- c) _____ if I'd visited my cousin. r _____

6. a) If I hadn't stayed late at the observatory, I wouldn't have bumped into my friend Jessica. r _____
b) If I hadn't stayed late at the observatory, not / break / expensive / telescope. r _____

- c) If I hadn't stayed late at the observatory, _____. r _____