

Test Your Grammar Skills

26 Past, Present, and Future Uses of Would

Would is used:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. as the past form of will | (see 7 sentences labelled P below) |
| 2. to describe hypothetical situations | (see 12 sentences labelled H below) |
| 3. to create a formal or polite sentence | (see 7 sentences labelled F below) |

Connected:

1. Past:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| a) past intentions/expectations | It was clear that they would phone back again. (P) | |
| b) reported speech (past of will) | He said he would see me at work the following day. (P) | |
| c) used to | They would walk home by the river every Friday. (P) | } |
| d) insistence | He would keep (on) begging me to go, but I couldn't. (P) | |
| e) 3rd conditional | If I hadn't met her, we wouldn't have become friends. (H) | } |
| f) would + have (did not happen) | I would have gone to the match, but I didn't have time. (H) | |
| g) past possibility | I needed to find somebody who would listen to me. (P) | |
| h) future in the past #1 (result) | Emily would go on to win first prize in the contest. (P) | } |
| i) future in the past #2 (prediction) | I thought/knew/believed/was sure you would buy that car. (P) | |

2. Present:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| a) likes and dislikes | I would like/love/hate another cup of tea. (F) | } |
| b) offers and invitations | Would you like to go for a walk, Deidre? (F) | |
| c) Polite requests (indirect questions) | Would you.../Would you be able to.../Would it be possible for you to... + infinitive; Would you mind... + gerund (F) | |
| d) typical behaviour | You would say/do that, wouldn't you? (H) | |
| e) to express uncertainty | He would seem/appear to be late. / I wouldn't know. (F) | } |
| f) 2 nd conditional (hypothetical) | If I were better paid, I wouldn't be living in this flat. (H) | |
| g) mixed conditional | If I'd done more revision, I wouldn't be so nervous now. (H) | |
| h) permission (formal/literary) | "May I sit here?" "I would be glad/honoured if you would." (F) | |
| i) adjective: a would-be + position | John is a would-be pilot. = an aspiring/wannabe pilot (H) | |
| j) hypothetical behaviour (now) | I'd give you half of my dessert, but it's too delicious! (H) | |

3. Future:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| a) 2 nd conditional – unreal future | If I had enough money, I'd climb Mount Kilimanjaro. (H) | } |
| b) advice: If I were you/him/her/them | If I were you, I wouldn't go to the gig next week. (H) | |
| c) imaginary/hypothetical plans | It would be good to have a walk this evening. (F) | } |
| d) preferences | I would prefer not to/rather not go to the auction. (F) | |
| e) predictions/probability | I'd think/imagine/guess it would probably rain later. (H) | |
| f) I wish / If only + would | I wish it would snow tomorrow. (H) | } |
| g) would that (formal/literary; | Would that they would/could change their ways. / | |
| strong wish/regret) | Would that I were healthier/richer/stronger,etc. (H) | |

Fact file:

- *would* is a modal auxiliary verb. It only has one form, so cannot be conjugated.
- After *would* there must be a verb infinitive without to. The negative form is: *would not* / *wouldn't*.
- The contraction is 'd, e.g. She would like to get a job. / She'd like to get a job. Avoid confusion with the past form contraction of had: She had got a job. / She'd got a job.
- It is pronounced Wuud. It is a homophone with the material "wood". They both sound exactly the same but have different spellings and meanings. The weak form is wd.
- *would* dates back to the 14th century. It was first recorded c.1300 as the Old English word *wolde*, which was the past form of *wyllen*, which we know today as *will*.

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26 Past, Present, and Future Uses of Would – Activities

a) Write one sentence in three forms (+, -, ?) to show an example of *would* in each use:

b) When is *would* used...?

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. as the past form of will | (label your sentences P below) |
| 2. to describe hypothetical situations | (label your sentences H below) |
| 3. to create a formal or polite sentence | (label your sentences F below) |

1. Past:

- a) past intentions/expectations _____
- b) reported speech (past of will) _____
- c) used to _____
- d) insistence _____
- e) 3rd conditional _____
- f) would + have (did not happen) _____
- g) past possibility _____
- h) future in the past #1 (result) _____
- i) future in the past #2 (prediction) _____

2. Present:

- a) likes and dislikes _____
- b) offers and invitations _____
- c) Polite requests (indirect questions) _____
- d) typical behaviour _____
- e) to express uncertainty _____
- f) 2nd conditional (hypothetical) _____
- g) mixed conditional _____
- h) permission (formal/literary) _____
- i) adjective: a would-be + position _____
- j) hypothetical behaviour (now) _____

3. Future:

- a) 2nd conditional – unreal future _____
- b) advice: If I were you/him/her/them _____
- c) imaginary/hypothetical plans _____
- d) preferences _____
- e) predictions/probability _____
- f) I wish / If only + would _____
- g) would that (formal/literary; strong wish/regret) _____

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26 Past, Present, and Future Uses of Would – Activities

a) Write one sentence in three forms (+, -, ?) to show an example of would in each use:

Answers will vary. Sample answers:

c) used to

- + They would walk home by the river every Friday.
- They would not (wouldn't) walk home by the river every Friday.
- ? Would they walk home by the river every Friday?

1. Past:

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26 Past, Present, and Future Uses of Would – Mix and Match

Instructions: cut out the cards and mix them up; SS circle **P** (past of will), **H** (hypothetical), or **F** (formal language); then put them into groups according to time and use, or match connected sentence pairs:

1. Past:

a)	It was clear that they would phone back again.	P / H / F
b)	He said he would see me at work the following day.	P / H / F
c)	They would walk home by the river every Friday.	P / H / F
d)	He would keep begging me to go, but I couldn't.	P / H / F
e)	If I hadn't met her, we wouldn't have become friends.	P / H / F
f)	I would have gone to the match, but I didn't have time.	P / H / F
g)	I needed to find somebody who would listen to me	P / H / F
h)	Emily would go on to win first prize in the contest.	P / H / F
i)	I knew you would buy that car.	P / H / F

2. Present:

a)	I would love another cup of tea.	P / H / F
b)	Would you like to go for a walk, Deidre?	P / H / F
c)	Would you be able to give me a lift to the station, please?	P / H / F
d)	You would say that, wouldn't you?	P / H / F
e)	He would appear to be late.	P / H / F
f)	If I were better paid, I wouldn't be living in this flat.	P / H / F
g)	If I'd done more revision, I wouldn't be so nervous now.	P / H / F
h)	"May I sit here?" "I would be glad if you would."	P / H / F
i)	John is a would-be pilot.	P / H / F
j)	I'd give you half of my dessert, but it's too delicious!	P / H / F

3. Future:

a)	If I had enough money, I'd climb Mount Kilimanjaro.	P / H / F
b)	If I were you, I wouldn't go to the gig next week.	P / H / F
c)	It would be good to have a walk this evening.	P / H / F
d)	I would rather not go to the auction.	P / H / F
e)	I'd imagine it would probably rain later.	P / H / F
f)	I wish it would snow tomorrow.	P / H / F
g)	Would that I were healthier!	P / H / F

Test Your Grammar Skills

26 Past, Present, and Future Uses of Would – Mix and Match (Blank)

Instructions: working in pairs or small groups, SS write sentences that correspond to each use of would in each time below, then cut out the cards, mix them up and give them to another pair or group to sort and put into groups:

1. Past:

a)		P / H / F
b)		P / H / F
c)		P / H / F
d)		P / H / F
e)		P / H / F
f)		P / H / F
g)		P / H / F
h)		P / H / F
i)		P / H / F

2. Present:

a)		P / H / F
b)		P / H / F
c)		P / H / F
d)		P / H / F
e)		P / H / F
f)		P / H / F
g)		P / H / F
h)		P / H / F
i)		P / H / F
j)		P / H / F

3. Future:

a)		P / H / F
b)		P / H / F
c)		P / H / F
d)		P / H / F
e)		P / H / F
f)		P / H / F
g)		P / H / F