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Grammar – Conditionals

Express Regret and Relief with Third Conditional 1

Third Conditional – <mark>*If + past perfect, would / could / might + have + past participle*</mark> *– 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 <u>not</u> 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 <u>not</u> 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_____

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Answers may vary. Suggested answers:

1. a) If the plane had taken off on time, I wouldn't have been late for my meeting.   regret

   b) If the plane had taken off on time,   not / have / time / browse / duty-free / shops.   relief

   If the plane had taken off on time, I wouldn't have had time to browse the duty-free shops.

   c) If the plane had taken off on time, I would've been home for dinner.   regret

2. a) If I had bought flowers for Alex, she would have been angry, because she is allergic to pollen.   relief

   b) If I had bought flowers for Alex,   go out / me.   regret

   If I had bought flowers for Alex, she might have gone out with me.

   c) If I had bought flowers for Alex, she would have felt embarrassed.   relief

3. a) I wouldn't have had so much fun if I'd worked harder at school.   relief

   b) become / doctor   if I'd worked harder at school.   regret

   I could have become a doctor if I'd worked harder at school.

   c) I wouldn't have upset my parents if I'd worked harder at school.   regret

4. a) If I had trained as a masseur, I could have had my own practice.   regret

   b) If I had trained as a masseur,   work / be / really / boring.   relief

   If I had trained as a masseur, the work would have been really boring.

   c) If I had trained as a masseur, I would have made a lot of money.   regret

5. a) I would have been able to see their new baby if I'd visited my cousin.   regret

   b) be / late / Zumba / class   if I'd visited my cousin.   relief

   I would have been late for my Zumba class if I'd visited my cousin.

   c) We would probably have had a big fight if I'd visited my cousin.   relief

6. a) If I hadn't stayed late at the observatory, I wouldn't have bumped into my friend Jessica.   relief

   b) If I hadn't stayed late at the observatory,   not / break / expensive / telescope.   regret

   If I hadn't stayed late at the observatory, I wouldn't have broken that expensive telescope.

   c) If I hadn't stayed late at the observatory, I wouldn't have asked my question about the Moon.   relief