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Grammar – Conditionals

Express Regret and Relief with Third Conditional 2

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:

- a) If we had stayed at home last night, we would have caught my favourite film. r _____

b) If we had stayed at home last night, miss / street / festival. r _____

c) If we had stayed at home last night, _____. r _____
- a) If the courier had delivered the grill yesterday, I wouldn't have been at home to receive it. r _____

b) If the courier had delivered the grill yesterday, have / barbecue. r _____

c) If the courier had delivered the grill yesterday, _____. r _____
- a) We would still be friends if I hadn't interrupted Gemma's wedding. r _____

b) she / not / marry / me / instead if I hadn't interrupted Gemma's wedding. r _____

c) _____ if I hadn't interrupted Gemma's wedding. r _____
- a) If you hadn't eaten the last chocolate, I could have eaten it. r _____

b) If you hadn't eaten the last chocolate, you / miss out. r _____

c) If you hadn't eaten the last chocolate, _____. r _____
- a) If we'd had two kids, we wouldn't have been able to focus all our attention on little Alan. r _____

b) If we'd had two kids, there / be / friend / little / Alan. r _____

c) If we'd had two kids, _____. r _____
- a) If I hadn't quit Instagram, I wouldn't have had enough time for volleyball practice. r _____

b) If I hadn't quit Instagram, get / urgent / message. r _____

c) If I hadn't quit Instagram, _____. r _____

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Answers may vary. Suggested answers:

1. a) If we had stayed at home last night, we would have caught my favourite film. regret
b) If we had stayed at home last night, miss / street / festival. relief
If we had stayed at home last night, **we would've missed the street festival.**
c) If we had stayed at home last night, **we'd have had no choice but to clean the kitchen.** relief

2. a) If the courier had delivered the grill yesterday, I wouldn't have been at home to receive it. relief
b) If the courier had delivered the grill yesterday, have / barbecue. regret
If the courier had delivered the grill yesterday, **we could have had a barbecue.**
c) If the courier had delivered the grill yesterday, **Rachael could have paid for it instead of me.** regret

3. a) We would still be friends if I hadn't interrupted Gemma's wedding. regret
b) she / not / marry / me / instead if I hadn't interrupted Gemma's wedding. relief
She would not have married me instead if I hadn't interrupted Gemma's wedding.
c) **I wouldn't have impressed your grandma** if I hadn't interrupted Gemma's wedding. relief

4. a) If you hadn't eaten the last chocolate, I could have eaten it. regret
b) If you hadn't eaten the last chocolate, you / miss out. relief
If you hadn't eaten the last chocolate, **you would have missed out.**
c) If you hadn't eaten the last chocolate, **I would have given it to my mum.** regret

5. a) If we'd had two kids, we wouldn't have been able to focus all our attention on little Alan. relief
b) If we'd had two kids, there / be / friend / little / Alan. regret
If we'd had two kids, **there would have been a friend for little Alan.**
c) If we'd had two kids, **our family would have felt complete.** regret

6. a) If I hadn't quit Instagram, I wouldn't have had enough time for volleyball practice. relief
b) If I hadn't quit Instagram, get / urgent / message. regret
If I hadn't quit Instagram, **I would have got your urgent message.**
c) If I hadn't quit Instagram, **I would've wasted hours on it every day.** relief