

Reminder - Modal Verbs

- ❖ Used to describe uncertainty, certainty, suggestion, obligations, probability or ability, or to ask (or give) permission

can	may	must	shall	will
ability / permission	uncertainty	obligation	= will	certainty
could	might	-	should	would
possibility	unlikely		obligation + uncertainty	Uncertain due to a difficulty

Conditional Sentences

- ❖ If/when [*something is true*], [*something else – modal verb? – happens*]

-- or --

- ❖ [*Something – modal verb? – happens*]
if/when [*something is true*]

Use a **modal verb** when there is uncertainty

Examples

- **If** you freeze water, it becomes solid.
- **If** it rains tomorrow, I'll take the car.
- **If** I lived closer to the cinema, I **would** go more often.
- I **will** have an ice cream **when** the weather is hotter.

Examples (present or future)

- **If** you have a library card you **can** borrow books for 2 weeks.
- **If** you study hard, you **will** pass your exams.
- You **will** pass your exams **if** you study hard.

if/when + present tense >> can/may/will + infinitive

fanciful situations!!

- **if I Were a spaceman,** I could have my next birthday on Mars
- **if I ate 10 prunes for breakfast,** I should stay close to the toilet for the next 4 hours
- **if I Was 18 years old again,** I would look for a new husband

Special cases

When things are generally true ... e.g.

- **if** I drink too much coffee, I don't sleep at night.
- Ice melts **if** you heat it.
- **When** the sun goes down, it gets dark.

notice that there is usually no **modal verb**
if/when + present tense >> present tense

Special cases

When present/future things are impossible or unlikely ... e.g.

- **If** we had a garden, we **could** have a cat.
- **If** I won a lot of money, I'**d** buy a big house in the country.
- I **wouldn't** worry **if** I were you.
- **If** I were prime minister, I **would** make all Honkies go to the SBC Conversation Club

if/when + past tense >> would + infinitive

Special cases

When imagining a different past e.g.

- **If** I had read the instructions properly, I **would** have built the table in 1 hour.
- We **wouldn't** have lost **if** David Beckham had been on the pitch.
- *if/when + past perfect tense >> would have + past participle*