E-Resource Center

GRAMMAR TUTORIALS

📋 **Grammar Explanation**

Choosing the right verb in conditional sentences

- When *if* is used to introduce a dependent clause, the sentence is called a conditional sentence. **Unreal conditional sentences** express unreal or imaginary situations, while **future possible conditionals** are used to predict what will happen in the future under certain circumstances.

- In unreal conditionals, the verb in the dependent clause (*if*-clause) is in the past tense, and in the independent clause (result clause) *would + the base* form of the verb is used.

   o Example: *If I **had** a million dollars, I **would donate** a portion of it to my university.*

- In the unreal conditional, *were* is used in the **if-clause** even with *I*, *he*, *she* and *it*.

   o Example: *If I **were** president, I **would support** universal health care.*

- In future possible conditionals, the verb in the **if-clause** is in the present tense, and the verb in the **result clause** is in the future tense.

   o Example: *If I **have** time after finishing my homework tonight, I **will call** you.*

Excerpted from: Verb Tenses: Exercise 3

Created in 2007 at the Center for English Language Support, John Jay College, on a U.S. Department of Education
(Title V Collaborative) Grant awarded to John Jay College of Criminal Justice and Queensborough Community College.