

# The use of 'would'

'Would' is a modal auxiliary verb. This means that we use it in combination with another main verb.

## Structure for 'would'

The basic structure for 'would' is:  
**subject + would + main verb**

Like all modal auxiliary verbs, 'would' is invariable. It doesn't matter what the subject is or if you're talking about the past, the future or an imaginary situation, there is only one form: would.

When we use 'would' as the auxiliary verb, we don't use 'to' with the main verb, which is always in its base form. It's not correct to say, "I would to be nervous about marrying into the British royal family!" We say, "I would be nervous..."

So, when you use 'would', there's no need to conjugate anything!

Just be careful with the contracted form, -'d. It could be 'would' or 'had'.

- We would like to take Adriene's yoga lessons.
- We'd like to take Adriene's yoga lessons.
- We had asked to join, but she said the class was full.
- We'd asked to join, but she said the class was full.

How can you know if -'d is 'would' or 'had'? Look at the main verb! If it's not conjugated, -'d is 'would'.

✓ Here is the word order in positive and negative statements:

	subject	auxiliary 'would'	not*	base verb	
+	It	would		change	her life.
-	They	would	not	show	us the engagement ring.

\*'would not' can be contracted as 'wouldn't'

✓ In questions, we invert the subject and 'would':

	auxiliary 'would'	subject	main verb	base verb
?	Would	you	eat	flowers?

## Uses for 'would'

Most often, we use 'would':

To talk about habitual past behaviour, similar to the structure 'used to':

- When we were kids, we would play 'wedding' with our neighbours.

In structures called the 2nd conditional and 3rd conditional, to talk about hypothetical situations:

- What would happen if students didn't learn handwriting at school?
- If we hadn't checked whether the flowers were edible, we would have gotten sick!

As a kind of past tense of 'will' or 'going to':

- Adriene Mischler knew that that her yoga programs would be successful.

For the future in the past, to express something that had not yet happened at a time in the past, but that would happen later:

- Jane Goodall went to Kenya when she was 23, and the trip would change her life.

We also use 'would' to express 'politeness':

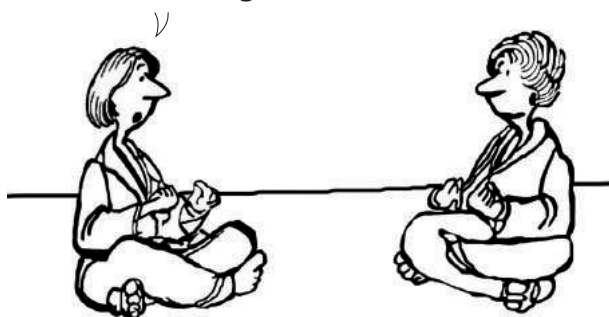
In requests and questions:

- Would you mind if I invite some friends over to watch the royal wedding?

To make polite offers:

- Would you like some lavender lemonade?

"I used to worry that I would fall asleep while meditating."



**EXERCISE 1 Put 'would' in the correct position**

Each sentence needs the auxiliary 'would'. Insert it at the correct place in the sentence.

- 1/ When Princess Diana was alive, my parents follow news of the royal family closely. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2/ When I was a kid, I never thought I marry a prince! \_\_\_\_\_
- 3/ Which you prefer to study: typing or cursive writing? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4/ If I were you, I learn to type! It'll be more useful. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5/ you mind if I tried a new recipe for dinner? It has flowers in it! \_\_\_\_\_

**EXERCISE 2 Complete the sentence**

Choose the correct option to complete the sentence.

- 1/ If we had a small wedding, we \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of money!
  - a. would to save
  - b. would save
  - c. will save
- 2/ I thought yoga \_\_\_\_\_ boring, but it was a lot of fun!
  - a. would be
  - b. was be
  - c. woulded
- 3/ Jane Goodall loved animals when she was a kid. This \_\_\_\_\_ the tone for her work in Africa later in her life.
  - a. did set
  - b. would set
  - c. could set
- 4/ In the past, recruiters \_\_\_\_\_ candidates' handwriting to learn about their personality.
  - a. would analyse
  - b. would to analyse
  - c. would analysed
- 5/ If I were you, I \_\_\_\_\_ flowers that grow near sidewalks!
  - a. don't would eat
  - b. wouldn't eat
  - c. not would eat

"I really don't understand why you would like to change your name to Steve!"

**EXERCISE 3 Would or had?**

Write the full form of the verb. Does the '-d' mean 'would' or 'had'?

- 1/ The Queen'd approved the marriage before Prince Harry proposed to Meghan Markle. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2/ I'd like you to call the wedding planner tomorrow. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3/ Some people think it'd be a bad idea to stop teaching handwriting. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4/ They'd planned to create a startup, but couldn't raise the money to begin the project. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5/ Do you think you'd like to work with animals, like Jane Goodall? \_\_\_\_\_

**EXERCISE 4 Which use of 'would'?**

Match the sentence to the corresponding use of 'would'.

- 1/ My grandmother would sometimes put flowers in her dishes. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2/ I thought my sister would like yoga, but she didn't care for it. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3/ Would you mind if we had a small wedding? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4/ He would be happier if he had a job working with animals, instead of an office job. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5/ Jane saved money for two years, because she knew the ticket to Africa would be expensive. \_\_\_\_\_

**Uses**

- a/ as a kind of past tense for 'will' or 'going to'
- b/ conditional
- c/ polite request
- d/ future in the past
- e/ habitual past behaviour