Second Conditional:
First vs Second Conditional: Real or Imaginary?

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

1. If it ___ tomorrow, we'll take an umbrella. (The forecast says rain is likely.)
   a) rained
   b) rains
   c) would rain
   d) will rain

2. If I ___ taller, I would join the basketball team. (I'm only 160 cm.)
   a) am
   b) will be
   c) grow
   d) were

3. If you ___ your homework now, your teacher will be pleased.
   a) finish
   b) finished
   c) would finish
   d) will finish

4. If I ___ the president, I would change the education system.
   a) am
   b) will be
   c) were
   d) become

5. If she ___ hard, she'll pass the exam. (She's a good student.)
   a) studied
   b) would study
   c) will study
   d) studies

6. If I ___ wings, I would fly to school every day.
   a) had
   b) have
   c) will have
   d) am having

7. If you don't hurry, you ___ late for class.
   a) would be
   b) will be
   c) were
   d) are

8. I ___ around the world if I didn't have to work. (But I have a full-time job.)
   a) will travel
   b) travel
   c) would travel
   d) am travelling

9. If the bus ___ on time, I won't be late for work.
   a) comes
   b) came
   c) would come
   d) will come

10. If I ___ you, I would apologise. (But I'm not you.)
    a) am
    b) will be
    c) was
    d) were

11. If you ___ that whole cake, you'll feel sick.
    a) ate
    b) eat
    c) would eat
    d) will eat

12. If I ___ a million dollars, I'd buy a house on the beach.
    a) have   b) will have
    c) had   d) am having

13. If he ___ the train today, he'll have to take a taxi.
    a) missed   b) would miss
    c) will miss   d) misses

14. I ___ that car if it weren't so expensive. (It costs £50,000!)
    a) would buy   b) buy
    c) will buy   d) am buying

15. If we ___ enough people, we'll play football this Saturday.
    a) had   b) have
    c) would have   d) will have

16. If I ___ invisible for a day, I would sneak into the cinema for free.
    a) am   b) become
    c) were   d) will be

17. If you ___ the doctor tomorrow, ask about your test results.
    a) saw   b) would see
    c) will see   d) see

18. If animals ___ talk, what would they say about humans?
    a) could   b) can
    c) will   d) are able to

19. If it ___ sunny this weekend, we'll have a barbecue.
    a) were   b) is
    c) would be   d) was

20. She ___ that job if she had a university degree. (She never went to university.)
    a) will get   b) gets
    c) would get   d) is getting

Answers

1. b) rains
2. d) were
3. a) finish
4. c) were
5. d) studies
6. a) had
7. b) will be
8. c) would travel
9. a) comes
10. d) were
11. b) eat
12. c) had
13. d) misses
14. a) would buy
15. b) have
16. c) were
17. d) see
18. a) could
19. b) is
20. c) would get

Explanations

1. "rains" (b)

The context says rain is likely (real possibility), so we use the first conditional: 'If it rains' (present simple). The second conditional ('If it rained') would suggest rain is unlikely or imaginary.

2. "were" (d)

The speaker IS 160 cm — being taller is an unreal situation that can't easily change, so we use the second conditional: 'If I were taller'. The subjunctive 'were' signals an imaginary condition.

3. "finish" (a)

This is a real possibility — you can finish your homework. Use the first conditional: 'If you finish' (present simple) + 'will be pleased'. The speaker believes this will probably happen.

4. "were" (c)

The speaker is NOT the president — this is an imaginary situation. Use the second conditional: 'If I were the president'. Becoming president is extremely unlikely for most people.

5. "studies" (d)

The context says she's a good student — studying hard is a real expectation. Use the first conditional: 'If she studies' (present simple, third person -s) + 'she'll pass'.

6. "had" (a)

Having wings is completely imaginary — people can't have wings! Use the second conditional: 'If I had wings'. The past simple 'had' signals an unreal condition.

7. "will be" (b)

Being late is a real possibility right now — this is a warning. Use the first conditional: 'you will be late'. 'Would be' is for imaginary situations; 'will be' is for real consequences.

8. "would travel" (c)

The speaker HAS a full-time job — not working is imaginary. Use the second conditional: 'I would travel'. The context '(But I have a full-time job)' confirms this is an unreal situation.

9. "comes" (a)

This is about a real possibility — the bus might come on time today. Use the first conditional: 'If the bus comes' (present simple). 'Came' would make it second conditional (unlikely/imaginary).

10. "were" (d)

'If I were you' is the classic second conditional advice pattern. The speaker is NOT the other person — this is inherently imaginary. Always use subjunctive 'were' in this construction.

11. "eat" (b)

This is a real warning — the cake is in front of you and you might eat it. Use the first conditional: 'If you eat' (present simple) + 'you'll feel sick'. A realistic cause and effect.

12. "had" (c)

The speaker doesn't have a million dollars — this is a hypothetical dream. Use the second conditional: 'If I had' (past simple) + 'I'd buy' (I would buy). 'Have' would make it first conditional (real).

13. "misses" (d)

Missing the train today is a real possibility. Use the first conditional: 'If he misses' (present simple, third person -s) + 'he'll have to'. This is about a specific event that could happen today.

14. "would buy" (a)

The car IS expensive (£50,000) — the speaker can't afford it. Use the second conditional: 'I would buy' + 'if it weren't so expensive'. This imagines a different (lower) price.

15. "have" (b)

Getting enough people is a real possibility for this Saturday. Use the first conditional: 'If we have' (present simple) + 'we'll play'. The speaker is making a realistic plan.

16. "were" (c)

Becoming invisible is completely imaginary and impossible. Use the second conditional: 'If I were invisible'. The subjunctive 'were' signals a condition that can never be real.

17. "see" (d)

Seeing the doctor tomorrow is a real, planned event. Use the first conditional with an imperative result: 'If you see the doctor, ask about...'. The imperative ('ask') replaces 'will + base verb' here.

18. "could" (a)

Animals CAN'T talk — this is entirely imaginary. Use the second conditional: 'If animals could talk'. 'Could' is the past/conditional form of 'can', used for unreal abilities in the second conditional.

19. "is" (b)

Sunny weather this weekend is a real possibility. Use the first conditional: 'If it is sunny' (present simple) + 'we'll have'. 'Were' would make it second conditional, suggesting sunny weather is unlikely.

20. "would get" (c)

The context says she never went to university — having a degree is an unreal condition. Use the second conditional: 'She would get' + 'if she had a degree'. This imagines a different educational background.