



How to say 'if' and 'would' in French

KS4 FRENCH

MODERN LANGUAGES

Ages 13-16 ⌚ 3 min read

What does 'if' mean in French?

In French, the word for 'if' is 'si' (pronounced 'see'). It's one of the most useful words you'll learn because we use 'if' all the time in English when we talk about possibilities, conditions, or imaginary situations.

For example: '**Si j'ai faim, je mange**' means '**If I am hungry, I eat**'. Notice how the 'if' part sets up a condition, and then something happens as a result.

Think of it like a recipe: '**If**' is the condition (like 'if you have flour'), and the second part is what happens next (like 'then you can make bread').

How do we say 'would' in French?

Saying '**would**' in French is trickier because it requires a special verb form called the **conditional tense**. This is when you imagine something that *might* happen under certain conditions.

In French, '**would**' is shown by changing the ending of a verb. For example, '**je parlerais**' means '**I would speak**', and '**tu mangerais**' means '**you would eat**'. The **-rais** and **-ais** endings tell us it's conditional—something that depends on something else happening first.

Think of it like a video game: you can't unlock level 2 unless you complete level 1. The 'if' part is level 1, and the 'would' part is what happens in level 2 if you succeed.

Putting 'if' and 'would' together

When you combine 'si' and the **conditional tense**, you create sentences about imaginary situations. For example: '**Si j'avais un million de dollars, je voyagerais autour du monde**' means '**If I had a million pounds, I would travel around the world**'.

This is called a **conditional sentence**, and it's really powerful for storytelling, daydreaming, and talking about what might happen in the future.

Think of it like wishing: '**If I had superpowers, I would fly to school**'. You're imagining something that isn't real, but describing what you'd do if it were.

Quick tip for learning

Practice by making your own sentences. Start with '**Si...**' to set up your imaginary condition, then add a verb with the **conditional ending** to say what would happen. Soon enough, you'll be speaking like a true French speaker!