



Expansion Activities
Understanding and Using English Grammar, 3rd Edition
Chapter 20: Conditional Sentences and Wishes

Activity: Chain of Conditions

Materials needed: None for the chains, the book *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Joffe Numeroff.



Description: This quick oral activity uses second conditional in fanciful hypothesizing. The teacher begins with a simple second-conditional statement, for example, “If I had more time, I would write a book.”

The first student then turns the teacher’s result clause into the “if” clause, and creates his or her own result. For example, the student might say “If I wrote a book, I might get famous.” Then a second student takes the first student’s result and turns it into a condition. Perhaps this student might say “If I got famous, I would move to New York City.”

The chain continues around the classroom with each student adding a link.

The same chain activity can be done with the third conditional making the chain more like a story that is slowly revealed:

If I had not gone out last night, I wouldn’t have gotten locked out of my house.
If I hadn’t gotten locked out of my house last night, I would have answered my phone.
If I had answered my phone, I would have won a prize from the radio station.

A suggestion: The children’s book *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* by Laura Joffe Numeroff. It is a children’s picture book, and it is a fun way to introduce the first conditional. The story goes wildly off after a child contemplates what will happen if he gives a mouse a cookie. The mouse will need milk to go with it, then it will want to look in a mirror to make sure it doesn’t have a milk mustache, etc. The text also incorporates modals of possibility in some of the results clauses.

An extra bonus about this book is the use of the first conditional instead of the second. This is a brainstorm point for your students -- why use the first conditional here instead of the second? Well, what seems purely hypothetical and impossible from our adult viewpoint (a 2nd conditional viewpoint), is in fact entirely possible and very likely to happen from a child’s viewpoint (the 1st conditional viewpoint).