



GRAMMAR PRACTICE

Third Conditional in Safety and Rules

Safety and Rules | Imagining a different past | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0511

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner. You may already use this grammar without noticing it.

No.	Question
1	What road safety mistake do you remember seeing or hearing about?
2	How could that mistake have been avoided?
3	What might have happened if nobody had reacted quickly?
4	What safety rule would have changed the result?

2. Grammar in context

Read the text. The bold phrases show the grammar used in a natural topic context.

Learning From a Safety Mistake

A student nearly had an accident while cycling to school. If he **had checked** the traffic more carefully, he **would have noticed** the car earlier.

Luckily, nobody was hurt. However, the situation **could have been** much worse if the driver **had not stopped** quickly.

Afterwards, the school reminded students about road safety. If that cyclist **had used** bike lights and reflective clothing, drivers **would have seen** them more easily.

3. Notice the pattern

Use the third conditional to imagine a different result in the past.

Use	Form / signal	Example
If clause	if + past perfect	If he had checked the traffic,
Result	would have + past participle	he would have noticed the car.
Possibility	could/might have + past participle	It could have been worse.
Negative	if + had not + past participle	If the driver had not stopped, nobody would have been safe.

4. Build accurate sentences

Complete each sentence using the grammar focus. Then write two examples of your own.

No.	Prompt	Use	Your answer
1	If he / check / the traffic, he / notice / the car.	would have	
2	If the driver / not stop, the accident / be / worse.	could have	
3	If students / use / bike lights, drivers / see / them more easily.	would have	
4	If she / follow / the rules, she / avoid / the problem.	would have	

1. _____

2. _____

5. Use it in exam answers

Complete the tasks using the grammar focus naturally.

Task	What to do
Speaking	Discuss how a safety problem could have been avoided.
Writing	Write a short paragraph about a rule that would have prevented a problem.
Reading	Underline third conditional forms in the context text.

6. Common mistakes

Correct the mistakes.

No.	Mistake	Your correction
1	If he checked the traffic, he would have noticed the car.	
2	If the driver had not stopped, it will be worse.	
3	If students had use bike lights, drivers would have seen them.	
4	She would avoided the problem.	

7. Topic discussion questions

Use these for pair work, small-group discussion, or speaking-test warm-up practice.

1. Can accidents help people learn better safety habits?
2. What rules would have prevented common school accidents?
3. Should people be punished if they ignore safety rules?
4. What could have been done to make roads safer in the past?

Third Conditional in Safety and Rules

4. Build accurate sentences

1. If he had checked the traffic, he would have noticed the car.
2. If the driver had not stopped, the accident could have been worse.
3. If students had used bike lights, drivers would have seen them more easily.
4. If she had followed the rules, she would have avoided the problem.

Own answers will vary. Check that the grammar focus is accurate and natural.

6. Common mistakes

1. If he had checked the traffic, he would have noticed the car.
2. If the driver had not stopped, it could have been worse.
3. If students had used bike lights, drivers would have seen them.
4. She would have avoided the problem.

Notes for checking

1. If clause: if + past perfect - If he had checked the traffic,
2. Result: would have + past participle - he would have noticed the car.
3. Possibility: could/might have + past participle - It could have been worse.
4. Negative: if + had not + past participle - If the driver had not stopped, nobody would have been safe.