

# 'Si' Clauses

**Si** clauses (**if** clauses in English) indicate possibilities, which may or may not become reality. They refer to the present, past, and future. These conditional sentences have two parts: the condition, or **si** clause, and the main or result clause which indicates what will happen if the condition of the **si** clause is met.

The tense of the result clause depends on the tense of the **si** clause. In other words, the tense of the two clauses follow a prescribed sequence.

# si + present (présent)

| si clause                                   | result clause                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>si + present</b><br>(possible condition) | <b>present</b><br>or<br><b>future</b><br>or<br><b>imperative</b> |

This first type of **si** clause is used in cases where the condition may be fulfilled and thus the consequence is seen as **possible**.

*Si j'ai assez d'argent, je ferai le voyage*

*If I have enough money, I will take the trip.*

*Si on étudie, on reçoit de bonnes notes*

*If one studies, one gets good marks.*

# si + imperfect (imparfait)

| si clause                                     | result clause |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------|
| si + imperfect<br>(contrary to current facts) | conditional   |

This second type of **si** clause is contrary to fact in the present. The consequence is thus seen as **impossible**. Note that in French, the imperfect is used in the **si** clause, never the conditional.

*Si j'avais assez d'argent, je ferais le voyage*

If I had enough money, I would take the trip

*Si vous veniez, nous resterions.*

If you came, we would stay.

# si + pluperfect (plus-que-parfait)

| si clause                                   | result clause    |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|
| si + pluperfect<br>(contrary to past facts) | past conditional |

This last type of **si** clause is used for situations that are contrary to past fact. The result clause thus expresses an unrealized **past** possibility.

*Si j'avais eu assez d'argent, j'aurais fait le voyage.*

*If I had had enough money, I would have taken the trip*

Si becomes s' before the pronouns il and ils, but not before pronouns elle and elles. The si clause can come first or second.

Note that either the si clause or the result clause may begin a sentence, but the same tenses remain specific to each clause ('Qu'est-ce que vous ferez demain si vous trouvez l'amour de votre vie?' is the same as 'Si vous trouvez l'amour de votre vie, qu'est-ce que vous ferez?')

# Pratiquez...

1. Answer the following questions: *Que feront les gens s'ils ont de l'argent ? Que feraient les gens s'ils avaient de l'argent ?* Follow the model.

Pierre / faire le tour du monde

Si Pierre a de l'argent, il fera le tour du monde.

Si Pierre avait de l'argent, il ferait le tour du monde.

- a) Anne / acheter une Mercedes
- b) Nous / aller en Europe
- c) Tu / s'habiller bien
- d) Marie et Nicole / venir nous voir plus souvent

2. Answer the following questions with as many choices as you can think of.

- a) Si tu vas en France, que feras-tu ?
- b) Si tu allais en France, que ferais-tu ?
- c) Que ferais-tu si tu avais faim ?
- d) Que ferais-tu si tu avais besoin d'argent ?

