

Grammar

Whether used in the condition or in the result, continuous verbs have the effect of putting stress on the fact that an event is or was in progress or repeated. This allows you not only to express ongoing action, but also to express interruptions and parallelism. If the continuous or repetitive nature of the action is not important to your statement, use the non-continuous forms of verbs.

Remember that the future form of continuous unreal conditionals is the same as the present form. Using a separate piece of paper, rewrite each sentence below as indicated using the continuous form of the verb. Preserve the verb's tense. We've done the first one for you.

1. If my MP3 player worked, I'd be enjoying music right now.

a. Express parallelism of action.

If my MP3 player were working, I'd be enjoying music right now.

b. Reverse the order of the sentence you wrote for a.

I'd be enjoying music right now if my MP3 player were working.

2. If our boss were here, we'd make these difficult decisions faster.

a. Stress that the result action is in progress.

b. Reverse the order of the sentence you wrote for a.

3. If Sarah had given the presentation, it would never have gone so far off track.

a. Stress the fact that the presentation went off track while the presentation was in progress.

b. Reverse the order of the sentence you wrote for a.

4. If our secretarial team had handled incoming calls properly, we wouldn't have received so many complaints.

a. Give the action in the condition the feeling of repetition.

b. Rewrite the sentence you wrote for a. to indicate that the complaints are in the process of being received today. You'll need to change to the present tense in the result.

c. Reverse the order of the sentence you wrote for a.

5. If my mobile phone had worked while I was on the road yesterday, I could have made calls most of the day.

a. Give the result action the feeling of an ongoing process.

b. Give the condition action the feeling of happening over a period of time in the past.

c. Give both the condition and result actions the feeling that they were happening in parallel.

The solutions are on page 31.