

Harry – gefangen in der Zeit

Begleitmaterialien

Episode 089 – Grammar

1. The subjunctive II in the past

The subjunctive II is used to express wishful thinking or situations that are contrary to reality. It can also be used to make requests and suggestions sound especially polite.

You're already familiar with the subjunctive II forms of "haben" and "sein" in the present tense, and with the other way of forming the subjunctive II by using "würde" + an infinitive.

Examples:

*Wenn das Orakel **funktionieren würde**, **wärst** du nicht mehr in der Zeitschleife.*

*Wenn mir das Orakel **helfen würde**, **hätte** ich keine Sorgen mehr.*

The subjunctive II can also be used in the past tense. To do that, you use the present perfect - with the helping verbs "haben" or "sein" and the past participle. The helping verbs then take their subjunctive II forms.

Present	haben	sein
Present perfect	Ich treffe dich.	Ich gehe zum Orakel.
Subjunctive II	Ich habe dich getroffen .	Ich bin zum Orakel gegangen .
	Ich hätte dich getroffen .	Ich wäre zum Orakel gegangen .

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Here is an overview of all the forms used in subjunctive II in the past tense.

ich	sein		ich	haben	
du	<i>wäre</i>		du	<i>hätte</i>	
er/sie/es	<i>wärest</i>		er/sie/es	<i>hättest</i>	
wir	<i>wäre</i>	<i>gegangen</i>	wir	<i>hätte</i>	<i>geholfen</i>
ihr	<i>wären</i>		ihr	<i>hätten</i>	
sie	<i>wärt</i>		sie	<i>hättet</i>	
	<i>wären</i>			<i>hätten</i>	

2. Hypothetical condition clauses in the past

Hypothetical condition clauses in the past tense are parts of a complex sentence that allow you to play with thoughts and ideas. What would have happened had the circumstances been different? In these complex sentences, both the independent and subordinate clauses are in the subjunctive II form. The subordinate clause expresses the circumstance or condition. It is introduced by "wenn" or "falls" and a comma separates it from the superordinate clause. The superordinate clause describes the potential outcome. In past-tense hypothetical condition constructions, the subordinate clause is always in the past tense. But the main clause, which conveys the potential outcome, can refer to the past, present or future.

Examples:

Wenn wir dich nicht **getroffen hätten, hätten** wir die Suche wahrscheinlich **gestoppt**. (main clause: past)

Wenn wir dich nicht **getroffen hätten, hätten** wir jetzt keine Hoffnung mehr. (main clause: present)