

ENGLISH

Unit 10: Could, Would, Should



Pre-Intermediate English with

THE INSPIRE ACADEMY

Introduction

- Could, would, and should, are three of the most necessary words if you want to speak or understand the English language.
- All three of these words, however, can be difficult to understand at times, even though they are used so often.
- Sometimes, they could have double meanings or, frankly, just mean something else than what you might think they mean.
- One thing which is true of all of them is that they are all used as conditionals.
- A conditional is a word, or conjugation (like in romance languages) which signifies that some action possibly can or can not happen, in other words, it has yet to be seen and so it is unknown yet possible
- In this unit you will learn all the basics for could, would, and should.
- Let's get started!

Could

- Could is used as a way of saying that something can or cannot happen.
- In other words, whatever "could" happen is something that will happen, if the situation is right, or something that will not happen, if the situation is wrong.
- The point is that "could" is used in reference to a possibility.
- For example:
 - a. Ralph could go to the dentist on Monday, if he feels like it.
 - b. Ralph could get pizza for dinner tonight, but he's not sure yet.
- In sentence a we can see that Ralph has a possibility of going to the dentist on Monday, but that depends on if he feels like it or not.
- In sentence b Ralph could get a pizza for dinner tonight but he has not yet decided.
- In both a and b we see that something is possible but it depends on something.

Would

- Would is very similar to could in that it implies a possibility.
- However, it usually implies an imagined possibility.
- This means that there is a situation that is possible but for whatever reason is not possible at that moment.
- For example:
 - a. Ralph would go to the market today, if he didn't have something else to do.
 - b. Ralph would visit us, if we asked him to.
- In sentence a we can see that the imagined possibility is that Ralph goes to the market today. However it is only imagined because he cannot truly go to the market today because he has something else to do.
- In sentence b we can see that Ralph would visit, but he has to be asked so his visiting is only an imagined possibility.

Should

- Should is the most different out of the three.
- When you use should it either means that something must to be done, or it would be best action for something to be done.
- The best action is whatever someone thinks is to be done which has the greatest benefit.
- For example:
 - a. Ralph should go to the dentist and get his teeth cleaned.
 - b. Ralph should do his homework if he wants to get a good grade.
- In sentence a we can see that the best action for Ralph is to go to the dentist to get his teeth cleaned. He might have dirty teeth so it is a good idea to get them cleaned.
- In sentence b we can see that Ralph must do his homework if he wants to get a good grade.

EXERCISE

Please fill in each blank with:
should, could, or would

- 1.) I _____ go to the market today.
- 2.) I _____ wash my car, if I wasn't sick.
- 3.) She _____ go with you if you asked her.
- 4.) You _____ have bought those shoes, they looked great on you.
- 5.) I _____ do the dishes if you need me to.
- 6.) They _____ not see that movie, it's really bad.
- 7.) We _____ have gone for you, you _____ have asked us.
- 8.) _____ you come with us if you _____?

AUDIO EXERCISE

Listen to the audio and replace each will, can, and shall with their conditional form.



1.) _____

2.) _____

3.) _____

4.) _____

5.) _____

6.) _____

FRIEND EXERCISE

For this friend exercise you and your friend must each write 2 sentences for each word: should, could, would (6 sentences total).

However, when writing the sentences, you must leave the space blank where there would be a would, could, or a should.

Then you switch papers with your friend and try to fill in the blanks correctly.

Then you should give the papers back and see how many your friend got correct!

Good luck!

