Reading

Read the following lyrics. What is this song about?

Can you find the following in the song?

1st Conditional *describing* **a probable situation**
2nd Conditional *describing* **an imaginary situation**
3rd Conditional *describing* **an unchangable past situation**

Reflections

If you were younger,
If you were stronger,
What would you like to dare?
Would you climb a mountain?
Would you sail an ocean?
Would you just sit here and stare?
Do you feel blue?
Don't worry you'll get better,
Troubles work out and
Sooner or later fade away.

If you get richer,
If you get cooler,
What will you do to look great?
Will you fly a jet plane?
Will you buy a sports car?
Will you start a binge and lose your mates?
Your fortune, well, it doesn't make you better.
We all live once, and sooner or later pass away.

If you'd been wiser,
If you'd been gentler,
You would not have talked so loudly.
If you hadn't cheated,
If only you'd treated people with respect,
They would have been proud.
Take a look at everything you screwed up.
Now you regret that,
but it's too late to change the past.

Language

Although the 1st, 2nd and 3rd conditionals are vital to practise, it's important to realise that „If" has many other grammar functions.

Match the parts of the sentences below to see how and when the conjunction „If" is used apart from the common conditional clauses.

1.	If you want to learn English, …	A.	… we could go out.
2.	If you will fill in this form, …	B.	… we'd be in real trouble.
3.	We would appreciate it …	C.	… I might buy you some flowers.
4.	If she will get drunk every night, …	D.	… tell her to give me a ring.
5.	If I knew his name, …	E.	… if you would be so kind and leave.
6.	If you should run into Jane, …	F.	… you have to work very hard.
7.	If you asked me nicely, …	G.	… it's because I worked a lot yesterday.
8.	If I'm a bit tired, …	H.	… I should tell you.
9.	If my manager was/were to come in now, …	I.	… it's not surprising she feels sick.
10.	If only it would stop snowing, …	J.	… we'll get your car fixed by Friday.

Answers

If you want to learn English, you have to work very hard. (1F)

When we do not want to suggest that a situation is unreal or imaginary, we use ordinary tenses with *if* - the same tenses as with other conjunctions. Present tenses are used to refer to the present, past tenses to the past, and so on. This is a form of zero conditional.

If you will fill in this form, we'll get your car fixed by Friday. (2J)

We use *if + will* in polite requests. In this case, *will* is not a future auxiliary; it means *'are willing to'*.

We would appreciate it if you would be so kind and leave. (3E)

Would can be used to make a request even more polite.

If she will get drunk every night, it's not surprising she feels sick. (4I)

Will is used in the If-clause to express insistence. It is imperative that when speaking such a construction your voice emphasizes *will*. This usage is particular to British English; Americans do not use this.

If I knew his name, I should tell you. (5H)

After *I* and *we*, *should* can be used in British English with the same meaning as *would*.

If you should run into Jane, tell her to give me a ring. (6D)

We can suggest that something is unlikely by using *should* in the If-clause.

If you asked me nicely, I might buy you some flowers. (7C)

In unreal conditional sentences, we can use *might* to mean *'would possibly'*.

If I'm a bit tired, it's because I worked a lot yesterday. (8G)

An If-clause can be used when somebody admits a fact and gives a reason for it.

If my manager was/were to come in now, we'd be in real trouble. (9B)

This is another way of talking about unreal or imaginary future events.

If only it would stop snowing, we could go out. (10A)

We can use *If only* to say that we would like things to be different. It means the same as *I wish*. *Would + infinitive* refers to the future.

Source: Practical English Usage