

Subjunctive / Konjunktiv II

As you are aware of English has few commonly used subjunctive forms. Some of them are *if he knew, if he were, so be it, long live the king*. German, however, has a full conjugational system for the various tenses of the subjunctive mood.

German has two types of subjunctive. Right now you will learn about subjunctive II or the general subjunctive, whose forms are based on the past stem. There is also subjunctive I used for quotes.

Present Subjunctive II

The present subjunctive expresses a hypothetical or unreal condition in present as well as in future tense.

Ich wäre so gerne Millionär, dann wäre mein Konto niemals leer.
I would like to be a millionaire, then my bank account will never be empty.

There are two ways to put a subjunctive sentence together.

Way 1:

This way is used mostly with strong verbs.

Use the *präteritum* form of the verb and add umlauts if strong and possible.

war – wäre; fand – fände kam – käme gewann – gewänne

here are the endings

ich – e wir – en

du – est ihr – et

er – e sie - en

Ich nähme das rote Kleid
I would take the red dress.

Ich schliefe länger.
I would sleep longer.

Wenn ich nur länger bliebe.
If I would only stay longer.

Way 2:

Sometimes in way 1 the words do not look different and do not signify that the sentence is in subjunctive, therefore you must use way 2. This happens usually with weak verbs and sometimes with strong verbs in the wir and Sie/sie form.

Use the form of *würden* + perfekt

ich würde du würdest er würde wir würden ihr würdet Sie würden	ein Prinz (eine Prinzessin) heiraten.
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I would marry a prince/princess.

If you want to use *haben* or *sein* you must use way 1.

Ich hätte Du hättest Er hätte Wir hätten Ihr hättet Sie hätten	eine nettere Katze.
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I would have a nicer cat.

Ich wäre Du wärest Er wäre Wir wären Ihr wäret Sie wären	reich.
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I would be rich.

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Past Subjunctive II

The past subjunctive II consists of *hätte* or *wäre* + the *perfekt* form of the verb and means would have + past participle. It is used to express regret.

Ich hätte Du hättest Er hätte Wir hätten Ihr hättet Sie hätten	eine Pizza gegessen
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I would have eaten a pizza.

Ich wäre Du wärest Er wäre Wir wären Ihr wäret Sie wären	nach Deutschland gereist.
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I would have traveled to Germany.

- If you use a modal verb put the modal verb last. Both the modal verb and the verb go back to normal.
Ich hätte eine A in Deutsch bekommen sollen.
I should have gotten an A in German.
- If you use a modal verb with a subordinating conjunction (hateful) the order is hätte + perfekt + modal verb. Both the modal verb and the verb go back to normal.
Wir wussten nicht, dass wir für den Test hätten studieren müssen.
We didn't know that we must have studied for the test.
- If there is a modal verb not followed by another verb use the perfekt form of the modal verb.
gekonnt gewollt gemusst gesollt gedurft gemocht
Ich hätte das nicht gewollt.
I wouldn't have wanted that.