

# LESSON PLAN GUIDE

PictureBook English Reading Series — Grammar Fluency

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|-----------------|------------------------|--------------|--|
| <b>Category</b> | Fluency in Key Grammar | <b>Title</b> | Grammar Book 24 – The "What If?" Game: Imaginary Sentences |
| <b>Ages</b>     | 6–9                    | <b>Theme</b> | Subjunctive Mood — Present & Past Imaginary Conditionals   |

## INTRODUCTION OF THE BOOK

Welcome to the most imaginative book in the Grammar Fluency series! Through 15 sets of Reality vs Fantasy challenges, children master the Subjunctive Mood — the language of imagination, wishes, and hypothetical situations. From imagining life as a bird right now to rewriting history in Ancient Rome, children discover how English uses a deliberate tense shift to signal that something is not real.

The key concept is beautifully simple: to show that something is imaginary, English jumps one tense backwards. Present reality uses present tense; imaginary present uses past tense. Past reality uses past tense; imaginary past uses past perfect. Once children grasp this 'tense jump' rule, the entire subjunctive mood becomes logical rather than mysterious.

## REALITY FLIP — THE TENSE JUMP IN ACTION

| Reality (present tense)              | Imagination — flip it! (past tense verb) |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <i>I am a girl.</i>                  | <i>If I were a boy...</i>                |
| <i>I am home now.</i>                | <i>If I were in Canada now...</i>        |
| <i>I don't have a sister.</i>        | <i>If I had a sister now...</i>          |
| <i>I met her yesterday.</i>          | <i>If I hadn't met her yesterday...</i>  |
| <i>I didn't tell her about that.</i> | <i>If I had told her about that...</i>   |

## IMAGINARY CONDITIONALS — THE IF/WOULD PAIRS

| Type                     | Time                        | If clause                         | Result clause                                |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Present Imaginary</b> | Now / future unreal         | <i>If I were a bird...</i>        | <i>...I would fly south for winter.</i>      |
| <b>Present Imaginary</b> | Now / future unreal         | <i>If I were rich now...</i>      | <i>...I would buy a boat.</i>                |
| <b>Past Imaginary</b>    | Past unreal                 | <i>If I had eaten more...</i>     | <i>...I would not be hungry now.</i>         |
| <b>Past Imaginary</b>    | Past unreal                 | <i>If I had seen the movie...</i> | <i>...I would have known the ending.</i>     |
| <b>Mixed</b>             | Past cause / present result | <i>If I had studied harder...</i> | <i>...I would be at a better school now.</i> |

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*Children will be able to:*

- Understand that the Subjunctive Mood signals an imaginary or unreal situation
- Form present imaginary sentences — If I were..., I would...
- Form past imaginary sentences — If I had been..., I would have...
- Flip real sentences into imaginary ones using the tense jump rule
- Use would as the result partner in both present and past imaginary sentences

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

### 1. The Reality Check First

Always start with reality before entering the imagination. State a fact, then ask your child to flip it into an imaginary sentence using the tense jump. 'I am a girl' → 'If I were a boy...' 'I don't have a sister' → 'If I had a sister now...' Use the Reality Flip table above for practice. The contrast between the real sentence and the imaginary one makes the tense shift feel purposeful rather than arbitrary.

### 2. Introduce the Present Imaginary

Focus first on present imaginary sentences — the most common and intuitive type. The rule: present reality → past tense in the if-clause. 'I am not a bird' → 'If I were a bird, I would fly south for winter.' Emphasise the special form 'were' for all persons — not 'was'. 'If I were', 'If she were', 'If he were' — were is used throughout the subjunctive, even for singular subjects.

### 3. Master the Time Traveller — Past Imaginary

When imagining the past — rewriting what happened — we use the Past Perfect in the if-clause. 'If I had eaten a bigger breakfast, I would not be hungry now.' Ask your child: 'What would have been different if you had done something differently yesterday?' Encourage them to use: 'If I had..., I would have...' This Past Perfect subjunctive is a major milestone in English fluency.

### 4. Always use the Would Partner

Remind your child that the if-clause always needs a would partner to show the result. Present pair: if + past tense → would + base verb. Past pair: if + past perfect → would have + past participle. Practise both pairs using the conditional table above. The symmetry of the two patterns — once children see it — makes both feel easy to remember.

## FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Play the What If? History Game. Choose a famous historical moment and ask your child: 'What if this had happened differently?' For example: 'What if Cinderella had not lost her shoe?' or 'What if Alexander the Great had not conquered Persia?' Encourage full imaginary sentences: 'If Cinderella had not lost her shoe, the prince would never have found her.' or 'If Alexander had not conquered Persia, the world would have been very different.' This imaginative history activity produces sophisticated Past Perfect subjunctive sentences — the most advanced grammar structure in the entire series — in a genuinely exciting context.

Try the fun online learning activities for this book on our website!

[Click here to try the online learning activities](#)

## TEACHER'S NOTES AND TIPS

The subjunctive mood is one of the most advanced and most misunderstood areas of English grammar — yet this book makes it accessible through the simple and memorable 'tense jump' concept. The most important teaching points are: (1) 'were' is used for all persons in present imaginary sentences — never 'was'; (2) the if-clause and the result clause must use matching tense pairs — past/would for present imaginary, past perfect/would have for past imaginary. For classroom settings, the What If? History Game produces some of the most sophisticated and creative language in the entire series. Encouraging children to imagine alternative histories gives them a genuinely exciting reason to master the highest-level grammar structure they have encountered so far.