

Summary of Contrary-To-Fact Conditionals

1. Summary of Construction

1.1. “In a statement of a supposition **impliedly false**, the **imperfect** and **pluperfect subjunctive** are used in both protasis and apodosis. The imperfect refers to present time, the pluperfect to past.” (AG, 517)

1.1.1. (imperfect subjunctive) → (imperfect subjunctive) [present contrary-to-fact]

1.1.2. (pluperfect subjunctive) → (pluperfect subjunctive) [past contrary-to-fact]

2. Basic Variants

2.1. Present

2.1.1. If he were living, you would hear his words: **sī vīveret, verba eius audirētis.**

2.1.2. If he were of same mind, would he have dared to lead out the army? **hīc sī mentis esset suae, ausus esset ēdūcere exercitum?**

2.2. Past

2.2.1. Unless you had lost it, I should not have recovered it: **nisi tū āmisissēs, numquam recēpissem.**

3. Indicative Constructions

3.1. The indicative may appear in the **apodosis** of contrary-to-fact conditionals “to express what was **intended**, or **likely**, or **already begun**.” (AG, 517b)

3.2. These are rare conditionals: *very* rare with present and infrequent with past constructions.

3.2.1. (imperfect subjunctive) → (**imperfect** indicative)

3.2.1.1. If it were allowed, the mothers were coming: **sī licitum esset, matrēs veniēbant.**

3.2.2. (pluperfect subjunctive) → (**pluperfect** or **perfect** indicative)

3.2.2.1. If you had not prevented me, I had almost finished: **nī mē arcuissēs, sum paene perfectus.**

3.3. Indicative constructions are somewhat more common with impersonal verbs and the second periphrastic.

3.4. (Note: in the first construction, the apodosis precedes the protasis.)

3.4.1. He could not have become a sage, if he had not been born: **nōn potuit fierī sapiēns, nisi nātus esset.**

3.4.2. If he were a private citizen, he ought to be appointed: **sī prīvātus esset, is erat dēligendus.**

The Essential AG: 517a

Famous Phrase: **sī tacuissēs, philosophus mansissēs** (if you had remained silent, you would have remained wise) [i.e. chatter reveals stupidity; attributed to Boethius]