THIRD CONDITIONAL · SONG WORKSHEET

How did you two meet?

In 2017, almost four in ten American couples met online. Fewer and fewer met the old way, through friends.



Stanford study How Couples Meet and Stay Together, US couples.

However people meet, one small choice can change everything: the party you nearly skipped, the train you nearly missed.

Meet the song

If It Hadn't Been for Love · The SteelDrivers, 2008; Adele, 2011

Written by Chris Stapleton and Mike Henderson for the bluegrass band The SteelDrivers. Adele recorded it as a bonus track on her album *21*, which took the song to a much wider audience.

The singer looks back at everything love made him do. Imagining a different past is the job of the third conditional.

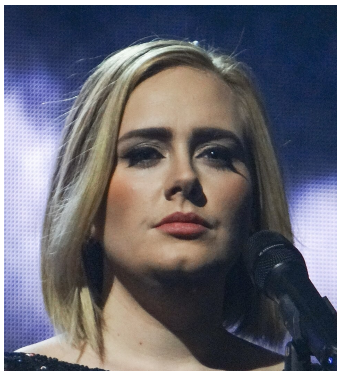


Photo: Adele by Kristopher Harris, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons, cropped.

Listen and read

Play the song in **Spotify**, **Apple Music** or **YouTube Music** with the lyrics switched on. Adele's version and the original both work.

Where to look	What to find
Every verse	Lines that start *Never would have ...* and end *if it hadn't been for love*.
The first verse	Two journeys he made because of love.
The last verse	What he did, and where he is now.
One line	*I wouldn't be ...* with an *-ing* verb: a result in the present, not the past.

One thing led to another

What happened	What followed	Third conditional
I went to the party.	I met Ana.	*If I hadn't gone to the party, I wouldn't have met Ana.*
I missed the bus.	I walked and found a café.	*If I hadn't missed the bus, I wouldn't have found it.*
		if + had + past participle, would have + past participle

Good to know

1. **If it hadn't been for X** = *without X*. *If it hadn't been for my teacher, I'd have failed.* The song title uses this.
2. **Short forms:** *I'd have* or *I would've*. In speech it often sounds like *would-uh*. Never write *would of*.
3. **Never would have** is the singer's style: *I never would have gone* = *I would never have gone*.
4. **Past and present mixed:** *I wouldn't be here now* gives a present result. That is a mixed conditional (see the White Flag sheet).

Song titles and artist names are used for identification only. esl.laboratory is not affiliated with or endorsed by the artists or their labels.

Practice

Exercise 1
Read the lyrics as you listen. Circle the right answer.

1. After *never would have*, the singer uses the **past participle** / **base verb**.
2. *If it hadn't been for love* means **without love** / **because of love**.
3. The line with *I wouldn't be ...* is about **the past** / **now**.
4. Looking back, the singer **regrets** / **celebrates** what he did.

Exercise 2
Number the story in the order it happens.

1. ___ The woman he loves leaves him.
2. ___ He falls in love.
3. ___ He ends up in prison.
4. ___ He travels a long way to be with her.
5. ___ He commits a terrible crime.
6. ___ He becomes angry and jealous.

Exercise 3
Rewrite with *If it hadn't been for ...*

1. Without my teacher, I wouldn't have passed the exam.
   _____
2. Without the rain, we would have won the match.
   _____
3. Without my sister's help, I would have missed the flight.
   _____

Exercise 4
Build the chain of the song's story. One sentence for each pair.

1. fall in love / travel so far
   _____
2. she leave him / he become jealous
   _____
3. commit the crime / end up in prison
   _____

Exercise 5
Complete with the right form of the verbs in brackets.

1. If I _____ (know) about the party, I _____ (come).
2. She _____ (not miss) the train if she _____ (leave) earlier.
3. If we _____ (not take) a wrong turn, we _____ (arrive) on time.
4. What _____ (you / do) if you _____ (lose) your passport?

Exercise 6
Each sentence has one mistake. Write it correctly.

1. If I would have known, I would have helped.
   _____
2. If she had took the job, she would have moved.
   _____
3. We would of won if it hadn't rained.
   _____
4. If you had told me, I had come.
   _____

Exercise 7
A lucky accident. Write about something good that happened by chance (50 to 70 words).

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