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.

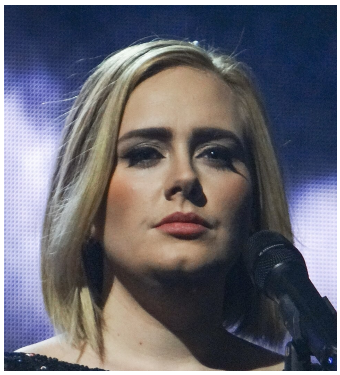


Photo: Adele by Kristopher Harris, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons, cropped.

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.

Teacher's notes: before, during, after

Content note: this is a murder ballad. The singer is in prison for a killing, and Adele introduced it on stage as a song about one. It works with most adult groups; check your class first.

Before

1. Use the chart: *How did you meet your best friend or partner?* Collect three stories and write the key event on the board.
2. Model one chain from a story: *If you hadn't gone to that party, ...*

During

1. First listen: just the story. Students do Exercise 2 from memory.
2. Second listen with the lyrics on: Exercise 1, and spot the *-ing* line.

After

1. Exercises 3 to 6. Turn Exercise 7 into a speaking round: *the luckiest accident of my life*.
2. Watch for *If I would have known* and *would of*.

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. **3** The woman he loves leaves him.
2. **1** He falls in love.
3. **6** He ends up in prison.
4. **2** He travels a long way to be with her.
5. **5** He commits a terrible crime.
6. **4** 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.
   If it hadn't been for my teacher, I wouldn't have passed the exam.
2. Without the rain, we would have won the match.
   If it hadn't been for the rain, we would have won the match.
3. Without my sister's help, I would have missed the flight.
   If it hadn't been for 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
   If he hadn't fallen in love, he wouldn't have travelled so far.
2. she leave him / he become jealous
   If she hadn't left him, he wouldn't have become jealous.
3. commit the crime / end up in prison
   If he hadn't committed the crime, he wouldn't have ended up in prison.

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

1. If I **had known** (know) about the party, I **would have come** (come).
2. She **wouldn't have missed** (not miss) the train if she **had left** (leave) earlier.
3. If we **hadn't taken** (not take) a wrong turn, we **would have arrived** (arrive) on time.
4. What **would you have done** (you / do) if you **had lost** (lose) your passport?

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

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

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

Example: *Five years ago I missed my train to Kraków, so I took the next one. I sat next to a woman who was reading my favourite book. If I hadn't missed that train, I would never have met her. She is now my best friend. If it hadn't been for that delay, my life would have been very different.*