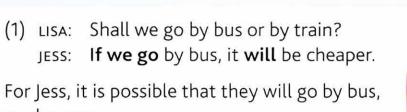
## Unit **38**

Α

## If I do ... and If I did ...

Compare these examples:



so she says: If we go by bus, it will be ...



- (2) Lisa and Jess decide to go by train. Later, Jess talks to Joe.
  - JOE: How are you going to travel?
  - JESS: We're going by train. **If we went** by bus, it **would** be cheaper, but the train is quicker.

Now Jess knows they are not going to travel by bus, so she says:

If we went by bus, it would be ... (not If we go ...)

When we imagine something that will not happen, or we don't expect that it will happen, we use **if** + *past* (**if** we **went** / **if** there **was** / **if** you **found** etc.). But the meaning is *not* past:

- What would you do **if** you **won** a lot of money?
- (we don't really expect this to happen)
- If there was (or were) an election tomorrow, who would you vote for?
- For if ... was/were, see Unit 39C.

## Compare if I find and if I found:

- I think I left my watch at your house. If you find it, can you call me?
- but If you found a wallet in the street, what would you do with it?
- We do not normally use **would** in the **if**-part of the sentence:
  - I'd be very scared if somebody pointed a gun at me. (not if somebody would point)
  - □ If we went by bus, it would be cheaper. (not If we would go)

But you can use if ... would when you ask somebody to do something:

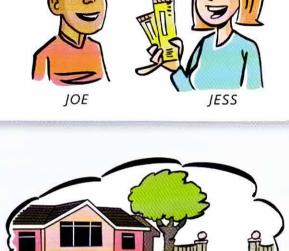
(from a formal letter) I would be grateful if you would let me know your decision as soon as possible.

In the other part of the sentence (not the if-part) we use would ('d) / wouldn't:

- What would you do if you were bitten by a snake?
- I'm not going to bed yet. I'm not tired. If I went to bed now, I **wouldn't sleep**.
- Would you mind if I used your phone?

Could and might are also possible:

- If I won a lot of money, I **might buy** a house. (= it is possible that I would buy a house)
- If it stopped raining, we could go out. (= we would be able to go out)



If we went by bus, it would be cheaper.



B