



What if...?

Lesson code: LE1V-XBVB-8TMU-T

UPPER INTERMEDIATE +

1 Phrasal verbs

Match each phrasal verb with its correct definition:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1. look at something | a. to begin a journey or voyage |
| 2. wipe something out | b. to completely destroy something, e.g. a village, crops, a species of animal etc. |
| 3. take off | c. to continue (doing something) |
| 4. set off | d. to do business with someone |
| 5. deal with someone | e. to examine something |
| 6. carry on | f. to leave the ground and begin to fly |
| 7. put something forward | g. to suggest a plan or proposal for other people to consider |

Now make up a sentence for each phrasal verb.

2 Predict the answers

Choose the correct alternative to each statement and check your answers by reading the article on the next page:

- The dinosaurs were wiped out...
a. 95 million years ago b. 65 million years ago c. 35 million years ago
- Islamic armies conquered Spain in...
a. 411 b. 511 c. 711
- The first attempt to build an aircraft was in...
a. 50AD b. 875 c. 1825
- Christopher Columbus discovered America in...
a. 1390 b. 1405 c. 1492
- The first landing on the moon was in...
a. 1965 b. 1969 c. 1973
- The name of the spacecraft that landed on the moon was...
a. Apollo 9 b. Apollo 10 c. Apollo 11




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What If...? An alternative history of the world

What if the dinosaurs had survived? Or the aeroplane had been invented 1,000 years earlier? Science fiction writer Stephen Baxter looks at the possibilities.

1 65 million years ago: The dinosaur extinction does not happen

Earth avoids collision with asteroid

Sixty-five million years ago, the dinosaurs still ruled land and sea, as they had for more than 100 million years. Then an asteroid hit our planet, wiping out 60 to 80 per cent of all living species. If the Earth had not been hit, the dinosaurs would have continued to evolve. One day, something similar to humans might have faced something like the dinosaurs.

2 875: Flight discovered 1,000 years early

Medieval Muslims use aircraft to conquer Europe

Just seven decades after the Prophet's death, Islamic armies advanced across north Africa, and from 711AD conquered Spain. Abbas Qasim Ibn Firnas was a Cordoban scholar who, aged 70, built a flying machine. The old man took off a mountain, but his machine lacked a tail, and he landed hard, hurting his back. But if he had succeeded, the Moors could have used their advanced technology to expand their empire in western Europe.

3 1442: Chinese explorers discover America

America is found, 50 years before Columbus

At the time of the 15th-century early Ming Dynasty, the Chinese went exploring. An explorer from the Yunnan Province, called Zheng He, went on seven westward expeditions, seeking new trading relationships. He set off in 1405 (15 years before the first great Portuguese voyages of discovery). His first expedition reached India.

In 1436 the Confucians saw the voyages as a threat and convinced the Emperor that China didn't need to deal with barbarian lands. Zheng He could have beaten Columbus to the Americas but went home because of politics.

4 1986: Nasa carries on to Mars

Nasa uses the Moon to fuel an expedition to the Red Planet

The millions who watched Apollo 11's first landing on the moon in 1969 had lived through an extraordinary expansion in spaceflight capabilities. We had no reason to believe it wasn't going to carry on. In 1969 Nasa put forward ambitious proposals for its post-Apollo future, including expeditions to Mars in the 1980s. Technically, it could have been done. But the Earth's only natural satellite was already a serious disappointment. If water had been found, the Moon would be a filling station outside Earth's gravity field. The political desire vanished. Missions to Mars would have brought benefits, because of the necessary advances in space-flight technology and long-duration missions.

Adapted from The Independent 31 August 2006



3 Find the words

Find a word or phrase in the text which means...

1. continued to live or exist after coming close to dying (*subtitle*)
2. controlled (*P1*)
3. develop gradually (*P1*)
4. took control of (a foreign land or country) (*P2*)
5. long journeys, especially by ship (*P3*)
6. persuaded (*P3*)
7. disappeared suddenly (*P4*)
8. lasting a long time (*adjective, P4*)

4 Grammar - Third and mixed conditionals

Look at the following sentence from the text and answer the questions below:

If the Earth had not been hit, the dinosaurs would have continued to evolve.

Was the Earth hit?

Did the dinosaurs survive?

The above structure is known as the **third conditional**.

Cross out the incorrect alternatives to complete the following rule:

We use the **third conditional** to talk about the PAST/PRESENT result of a HYPOTHETICAL/REAL situation in the PAST/PRESENT.

Complete the structure of the third conditional with **past perfect** and **past participle**:

CONDITION: If + _____, RESULT: would/could/might + have + _____

Underline another third conditional sentence in the text.

Now look at the following sentence and cross out the incorrect alternative in the statement below:

If water had been found, the Moon would be a filling station outside the Earth's gravity field.

The above structure is known as a **mixed conditional**.

The underlined structure refers to a PAST/PRESENT result of a hypothetical past situation.



5 Grammar practice

For each situation, form a third or mixed conditional sentence beginning with 'if':

1. Jane didn't study for her exam, so she failed it.
2. Ken didn't prepare for his job interview, so he doesn't have a job now.
3. There was a lot of traffic, so I was late for work.
4. Yesterday, I lost my keys. I couldn't get into the house.
5. You didn't let me know about the party, so I didn't come.
6. The meeting started very late, so I'm not at home yet.
7. James bought a lottery ticket and won \$10,000.
8. There was so much noise, so I wasn't able to concentrate.
9. John didn't buy a new car because he didn't earn enough money last year.
10. You stayed up late last night because you drank too much coffee.

6 Talking point

Think about some key events that happened or didn't happen in your country and discuss what life would be like now if things had been different.

