⏵ The subjunctive

The subjunctive is used rarely. One finds vestiges of it in a few hypothetical expressions (using "if + to be") and in a few set phrases.

(In many cases the subjunctive –– considered archaic or literary –– is replaced by the modal "would," used to express the conditional.)

Other meanings often communicated by the subjunctive in other languages will be expressed by modal verbs in English.

> In constructions using "if + to be", one should use "were" (instead of "was") with the first and third persons singular ("I" and "he," "she," or "it"). (In spoken English, and in much informal writing, "was" will still be used.)

If I were Muriel, I'd never go back there.
If she were alone, I'd stop by to see her.
He acts as if he were crazy.

> When you use verbs, the rule is easy to understand:
If I had enough money, I would buy a big house.

> Set phrases and proverbs:
God help us!
Long live the king!
Would that I were free!

⏵ TEST

Build a sentence with one part from column A and one part from column B. The sentence must be logical.

eg: If she had time, she would visit you.

A	B
a. She had time.	1. She would visit you.
b. John didn't know this beautiful girl.	2. She wouldn't eat at McDonald's every day.
c. They spent too much time on the beach.	3. He wouldn't invite her out.
d. Betty liked exotic food.	4. I would send you a postcard.
e. There was enough snow.	5. It would be cheaper.
f. You travelled by bus.	6. They would get sunburnt.
g. I had your address.	7. You would go skiing.

ANSWERS a1. If she had time, she would visit you. b3. If John didn't know this beautiful girl, he wouldn't invite her out. c6. If they spent too much time on the beach, they would get sunburnt. d2. If Betty liked exotic food, she wouldn't eat at McDonald's every day. e7. If there was enough snow, you would go skiing. f5. If you travelled by bus, it would be cheaper. g4. If I had your address, I would send you a postcard.