There are two types of subjunctive in German: **Subjunctive I** (or special subjunctive) is used in indirect discourse/indirect statements. **Subjunctive II** (or general subjunctive) is used to express a contrary-to-fact situation or to talk about a condition which exists only in the imagination or is desired or feared. It may also be used in indirect discourse.

**Formation of Subjunctive II**

There are two tenses used in subjunctive II: present subjunctive II is used to express a contrary-to-fact situation in present time. Weak verbs have the same forms in the simple past and present subjunctive II. The present subjunctive II of strong verbs is formed by adding the subjunctive endings to the past tense stem of the verb.

**Subjunctive Endings**

- e  - en
- est - et
- e  - en

**Note:** Strong and irregular weak verbs with A, O, U in the past tense stem are umlauted in present subjunctive II. (Exceptions: **kennte, sollte, wollte**)

Conditional: A form of **würde** and the **infinitive** may be used instead of any present subjunctive II form. The conditional is normally used in the conclusion clause of an “if-then” statement.

*z.B. Wenn ich nach Hause ginge, würde ich früh ins Bett gehen.*

Conditional forms of **haben, sein, werden** and the modals are generally not used.

Past subjunctive II is used to express a contrary-to-fact situation in the past. It is formed by using **hätte** or **wäre** (auxiliary) and the past participle.

**Additional Information Concerning Subjunctive**

**Subjunctive II is also used:**

1) to express potentiality (English: would be) = **Das wäre schön** - That would be nice.

2) to express probability (with modals dürfen or können) = **Das könnte er machen** - He could do that.

3) to express politeness

   **Dürfte ich Ihnen helfen?** - May I help you?
   **Möchten Sie ins Kino gehen?** - Would you like to go to the movies?
   **Könnten Sie mir das geben?** - Could you give me that?
USES OF SUBJUNCTIVE

1) Conditions may be true-to-fact or contrary-to-fact. True-to-fact conditions are based on reality.  
   If he takes his medicine, he will get well - reality (indicative)  
   If he took his medicine, he would get well - contrary-to-fact (subjunctive)

2) Contrary-to-fact conditions are based on unfulfilled possibility or probability and are expressed in the subjunctive. If he had seen him, he would have given him the letter.

3) True-to-fact conditions are expressed in the indicative.  
   Wenn ich Zeit habe, besuche ich dich.

4) Contrary-to-fact conditions in the present use the present subjunctive II in the wenn clause and conditional in conclusion clause.  
   Wenn ich Zeit hätte, würde ich dich besuchen.

5) Contrary-to-fact conditions in the past use the past subjunctive II in both the wenn clause and the conclusion.  
   Wenn ich Zeit gehabt hätte, hätte ich sie besucht. - If I had had time, I would have visited her.

6) If the wenn clause and the conclusion refer to different times, the times to be expressed must be in the appropriate tense.  
   Wenn ich mit dem Auto gefahren wäre, wäre ich jetzt dort. - If I had traveled by car, I would be there now.

7) Wenn (if) may be omitted in German - if it is, the verb is in first position in both clauses.  
   Hätte ich Zeit, würde ich kommen.

8) To express an unfulfilled wish in the present, German (like English) uses present subjunctive in the clause of a contrary-to-fact condition, sometimes adding nur (only) for emphasis.  
   Wenn er nur käme! - If he would only come!

   Similarly, a wish that something should have happened (but didn't) is expressed by using past subjunctive in the wenn clause of a contrary-to-fact condition.  
   Wenn er nur gekommen wäre! - If he had only come!

9) Also or als wenn (as if, as though) are usually followed by subjunctive II.  
   Er sieht aus, als ob er nicht geschlafen hätte. - He looks as if he hadn't slept.