The imperfect subjunctive

It is relatively easy to form, as long as you remember your preterite.

Three steps to success.

1. Take the third person plural of the verb in the preterite.
2. Take off the ending (ron)
3. Add the new set of endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>-ra</th>
<th>-’ramos (accent the preceding vowel)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ras</td>
<td>-rais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ra</td>
<td>-ran</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It’s the same for ar, er and ir verbs, regular and irregular.

Examples

-ar verb (hablar)

1. Third person plural preterite = hablaron
2. Take off ending = habla
3. Add the new set of endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hablara</th>
<th>Habláramos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hablaras</td>
<td>Hablarais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hablara</td>
<td>Hablaran</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-er and –ir verbs (comer)

1. Third person plural preterite = comieron
2. Take off ending = comie
3. Add the new set of endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comiera</th>
<th>Comiéramos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comieras</td>
<td>Comierais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comiera</td>
<td>Comieran</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This works with any verb. Let’s try the normally irregular “ser”

1. Third person plural preterite = fueron
2. Take off ending = fuer
3. Add the new set of endings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fuera</th>
<th>Fuéramos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fueras</td>
<td>Fuerais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuera</td>
<td>Fuiran</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Easy isn’t it?
¡Ahora te toca a ti!
a) Write the following verbs in the correct form of the present subjunctive

1. cantar __________________
2. escuchar __________________
3. vivir __________________
4. marcar __________________
5. ir __________________
6. saber __________________
7. poder __________________
8. jugar __________________
9. tener __________________
10. haber __________________
11. hacer __________________
12. soñar __________________
13. estar __________________

Use of the Imperfect Subjunctive
Note that the imperfect subjunctive is used after “Si” in the type of sentences saying: “If I were ……. I would …….”

It is also used after “como si” (as if) e.g. Me trata como si fuera niño = She treats me as if I were a child.

Revision exercises
A
1. Si yo (tener) …………… más dinero, compraría un Ferrari.
2. Si yo (ser) …………… un animal, sería un gato.
3. Juan moriría si (tener) …………… que trabajar toda noche,
4. Si yo no (haber) …………… hablado más en clase, habría sacado mejores notas.
5. Si Dios no (existir) ……………, habría que inventarlo.

B
1. If I were rich, I would buy a new home.
2. He speaks Spanish as if he were a native.
3. If you had paid your taxes you wouldn’t have all these problems.
4. If the government were to change the law, less people would die from smoking.

C
“If they arrive on time, we can go to the cinema.”

Can you explain why the subjunctive is NOT used after “if” in this sentence?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________