

CONDITIONALS

Conditionals are sentence structures that explain a particular situation of circumstance. A conditional relates to a sentence that expresses a condition. If this happens, then that happens. Conditionals are commonly referred to as ‘if sentence structures’ because they often contain the word if.

A conditional sentence is made up of two clauses, the first of which is the conditional clause and it starts with ‘*if*’ and we refer to it as the ‘*if-clause*’. The if-clause contains a condition, which if fulfilled another action will take place.

The other clause of the conditional sentence is the ‘*main clause*’. The main clause shows the effect of the action taken in the if-clause. The if-clause usually comes before the main clause although the reverse is possible.

NOTE: A comma comes after the if-clause if the clause comes before the main clause, but if the main clause comes earlier, no comma is required.

Ex: If you hurry, you will be able to catch the bus.
You will be able to catch the bus if you hurry.

There are four main Conditionals that are used most commonly in the English language. They are commonly referred to as:

1. The First Conditional (Type – 1)
2. The First Conditional (Type – 2)
3. The First Conditional (Type – 3)
4. The Zero Conditional

THE FIRST CONDITIONAL:

The first conditional deals with issues that have a real possibility of occurring. This conditional typically deals with future, real world events that are pondered on a daily basis. When people make plans and suggest back up plans, they are utilizing the first conditional.

In this *first conditional sentence*, the simple present tense (*v1*) is used in the if-clause, and the simple future tense (*will + v1*) is used in the main clause. We use this conditional when the situation in the **if-clause** appears likely and there is a possibility of it happening.

Examples:

- If I *see* him tomorrow, I *will tell* the good news.
- If you *help* me with this, I *will buy* you a drink.
- If it *rains* tomorrow, I *will go* to the movies.

EXERCISE:

Form *Conditional sentences – Type I* using the verbs given in the brackets.

Ex: Thomas _____ (*not / catch*) the bus if he _____ (*get up*) late.
➡ Thomas *will not catch* or *won't catch* the bus if he *gets up* late.

1. If you _____ (*dive*) into this river, you _____ (*hurt*) yourself.
2. If the sun _____ (*shine*), the children _____ (*play*) outside.
3. Richard _____ (*walk*) to school if he _____ (*miss*) the bus.
4. Emily _____ (*buy*) the cola if you _____ (*pack*) the picnic basket.
5. If I _____ (*be*) in Venice, I _____ (*rent*) a boat.
6. Michael's teacher _____ (*phone*) his parents if he _____ (*write*) text message during the lesson.
7. If she _____ (*answer*) this question correctly, she _____ (*get*) an extra point.
8. My sister _____ (*be*) angry if I _____ (*turn*) on the music too loud.
9. Your room _____ (*look*) much tidier if you _____ (*keep*) your hamster in the cage.
10. If we _____ (*surf*) the internet, we _____ (*find*) a lot of information about Loch Ness.

THE SECOND CONDITIONAL:

In some ways the second conditional is similar to the first conditional. It utilizes the same if/then structure, but instead of using the words will, shall, can, or may, the second conditional uses 'would'. The most significant difference between the second conditional and the first conditional, however, is that the second conditional deals with events that are not real possibilities.

We use this conditional to talk about the situation now, not in the past although we use the simple past tense in the if-clause. The situation we express is imaginary, unlikely or hypothetical, and is therefore unlikely to happen now or in the future. In many respects, the second conditional is what English speakers use when they are dreaming about something or fantasizing about a particular scenario.

The second conditional uses the simple past tense (*v2*) in the if-clause and the present conditional (*would* + *v1*) in the main clause.

Examples:

- If I **had** a million dollars, I **would open** an animal sanctuary.
- If we **lived** in Spain, we **would enjoy** the siestas.
- If I **became** president, I **would do** away with the penny.

NOTE: The condition beginning with ‘*If...were...*’ is usually used for something that is impossible to fulfill as it is not real and will always remain unreal.

Ex: If I **were** a billionaire, I **would donate** a lot to the charity.

EXERCISE:

Form **Conditional sentences – Type II** using the verbs given in the brackets.

Ex: If I _____ (*to go*) to the cinema, I _____ (*to watch*) an interesting film.

➡ If I **went** to the cinema, I **would watch** an interesting film.

1. If I _____ (*come*) home earlier, I _____ (*prepare*) dinner.
2. If we _____ (*live*) in Rome, Francesco _____ (*visit*) us.
3. If Tim and Tom _____ (*be*) older, they _____ (*play*) in our hockey team.
4. If he _____ (*be*) my friend, I _____ (*invite*) him to my birthday party.
5. If Sita _____ (*study*) harder, she _____ (*be*) better at school.
6. If they _____ (*have*) enough money, they _____ (*buy*) a new car.
7. If you _____ (*do*) a paper round, you _____ (*earn*) a little extra money.
8. If Mohan _____ (*get*) more pocket money, he _____ (*ask*) Doris out for dinner.
9. If we _____ (*hurry*), we _____ (*catch*) the bus.
10. If it _____ (*rain*), Nina _____ (*take*) an umbrella with her.

THE THIRD CONDITIONAL:

While the first two conditionals talk about possible future events, the third conditional deals with the past. Specifically, the third conditional expresses a situation in the past that did not happen, so when we use this conditional we are actually imagining a different past that cannot be changed. This unreal situation can never happen, not now or ever.

Because we can't go back in time, the third conditional deals with events that have no possibility of happening.

We use the 'past perfect' (*had* + *v3*) in the if-clause and the perfect conditional (*would have* + *v3*) in the main clause to convey these impossible events.

Examples:

- If Kennedy *hadn't been assassinated*, he *would have made* a great president.
- If I *had been* a businessman, I *wouldn't have led* a struggling life.
- If I *had earned* more money when I was young, I *would have been* happy.

EXERCISE:

Form ***Conditional sentences – Type III*** using the verbs given in the brackets.

Ex: If I _____ (*to go*) to the cinema, I _____ (*to watch*) an interesting film.

➡ If I *had gone* to the cinema, I *would have watched* an interesting film.

1. If the weather _____ (*be*) nice, they _____ (*play*) football.
2. If we _____ (*go*) to a good restaurant, we _____ (*have*) a better dinner.
3. If John _____ (*learn*) more words, he _____ (*write*) a good report.
4. If the boys _____ (*take*) the bus to school, they _____ (*arrive*) on time.
5. If the teacher _____ (*explain*) the homework, I _____ (*do*) it.
6. If they _____ (*wait*) for another 10 minutes, they _____ (*see*) the pop star.
7. If the police _____ (*come*) earlier, they _____ (*arrest*) the burglar.
8. If Alex _____ (*ask*) me, I _____ (*email*) the documents.
9. If he _____ (*speak*) more slowly, Peggy _____ (*understand*) him.
10. If you _____ (*buy*) fresh green vegetables, your salad _____ (*taste*) better.

THE ZERO CONDITIONAL:

This conditional uses the simple present tense in both parts of the sentence and is described as the fourth type known as the 'zero conditional'.

The '*zero conditional*' is used to describe something that is always true. They can often be thought of as stating a scientific fact.

Examples:

- If you don't ever *water* your plants, they *die*.
- You *get* water if you *mix* hydrogen and oxygen.
- If it *gets* below freezing, water *turns* into ice.
- If people *eat* too much, they *get* fat.

ADDITIONAL EXERCISES:

I. *Fill in the blanks with the correct verb forms using the words given in the brackets.*

1. If I _____ (**be**) you, I would accept the job.
2. If I had found the keys, I _____ (**give**) them to you.
3. If I _____ (**cook**) more, I would invite my friends for lunch.
4. If I win a prize in the lottery, I _____ (**travel**) to the Far East.
5. If they _____ (**have**) a shuttlecock, they would have played badminton.
6. If he had at least twenty thousand dollars, he _____ (**buy**) the house.
7. If only she _____ (**warn**) him in time, his life would have been saved.
8. If the tyre had not punctured, they _____ (**arrive**) earlier.
9. If he _____ (**fall**) from the tree, he would break his neck.
10. If they both kept quiet, there _____ (**be**) no argument.

II. *Form three Conditionals (Type-1, Type-2 & Type-3) of the following sentences.*

1. If I _____ (**want**) to sell my car, I _____ (**put**) an ad in the newspapers.
2. We _____ (**ask**) for help if we _____ (**lose**) our way.
3. If he _____ (**have**) an account in the bank, he _____ (**deposit**) the cheque.
4. If you _____ (**apologize**), she _____ (**speak**) to you again.
5. The plants _____ (**not / die**) if you _____ (**water**) the plants.
6. If I _____ (**speak**) to him directly, I _____ (**convince**) him.
7. She _____ (**travel**) all over the world if she _____ (**be**) rich.
8. If I _____ (**have**) money, I _____ (**buy**) a pair of shoes.
9. You _____ (**go**) to the doctor if you _____ (**be**) sick.
10. If they _____ (**study**), they _____ (**do**) well in the public examinations.