

The Conditional in the English Language

Aim: Improve recognition of the conditional forms used in conditional statements, while inductively reviewing the structures.

1- Zero Conditionals

This structure is used for talking about **scientific facts** and **general truth**. The time is **now** or **always** and the situation is **real and possible**.

STATEMENTS	
If Clause: Simple Present	Result Clause: Simple Present
If you freeze water ,	It becomes a solid
Planes cannot leave	if it is foggy.

YES/NO QUESTIONS	
Result Clause	If Clause
Does the airport close	if it snows ?
Can planes leave	If it is foggy?

SHORT ANSWERS	
AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE
Yes , it does .	No , it does not .
Yes , they can .	No , they cannot .

WH-QUESTIONS	
Result Clause	If Clause
Why does air get lighter	if it expands ?
What does happen	if you expose phosphorus to air?

Grammar explanation:

- ❖ You can also use Zero Conditional to talk about habits and recurring events (things that happen again and again)

Eg: If Bill **flies**, he **orders** a special meal.

- ❖ You can also use the present continuous in the '*if clause*'. Use the **present simple** in the **result clause**.

Eg: If I **am travelling** a long way, I always **fly**.

- ❖ You can also use **modals** such as **can/could, may/might, should, must** instead of **will/would** in the '**result clause**' to express different functions (ability, possibility, command, request, advice)

Eg:

If you **practise** English every day, you **can** improve quickly.

You **might** learn more if you **listen** to English CDs.

If you **want** to lose weight, you **must/should eat** less bread.

- ❖ Use the imperative in the result clause to give instructions, commands, and invitations that depend on certain conditions. Eg:

- ✓ If you want the seat to recline, **press** the button.
- ✓ If the seat belt light is on, **don't leave** your seat.
- ✓ If you come to London, **stay** with us.

2- First Conditionals (Conditional Type One)

This structure is used to talk about possibilities in the present or the future, and the situation is real. They refer to possible condition and its probable results.

AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENTS	
<i>If Clause: Present</i>	Result Clause: Future
If Baker wins ,	he will raise taxes. He is going to fight crime.

NEGATIVE STATEMENTS	
If Clause: Do/Does+not	Result Clause: will+not
If he does not lower taxes,	Businesses will not survive

YES/NO QUESTIONS	
Result Clause: Future	If Clause: Present
Will he lower taxes Is he going to fight crime	if he wins the elections?

SHORT ANSWERS			
AFFIRMATIVE		NEGATIVE	
Yes, he	Will.	No, he	Will not.
	Is.		Is not.

WH- QUESTIONS		
Result Clause: Future		If Clause: Present
What	will he do is he going to do	if he wins the election?

Grammar explanation:

❖ In order to express the first conditional in the English language use **the present simple** in the 'if clause' and **the future** in the 'result clause/main clause' with **will/ be going to**.

❖ You can also use a **modal** in the result clause.

Eg: If you want to win, you **must** register.

If you do not vote, you **might** regret.

Be careful

Even though the 'if clause' refers to the future, use the present simple.

eg: If she wins, she will fight crime. (*Not: If she will win,*)

3- Second Conditional (Conditional Type 2)

Second Conditional or Conditional type 2 is used to speak about unreal, untrue, imagined or impossible conditions and their results in the present. They are not based on fact, and they refer to an unlikely or hypothetical condition and its probable results.

AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENTS	
<i>If Clause: Simple past</i>	Result Clause: would+Base form of the verb
If he worked harder,	he would earn more money.
If he were in love,	he would get married.

NEGATIVE STATEMENTS	
If Clause: did+not+verb(infinitive)	Result Clause:would+not+verb(inf)
If he did not work harder ,	he would not earn more money.
If he were not in love ,	he would not get married.

YES/NO QUESTIONS	
Result Clause:	If Clause:
Would he earn more money	if he worked harder?
Would he get married	if he were in love?

SHORT ANSWERS	
AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE
Yes , I would	No , I would not .

WH- QUESTIONS	
Result Clause:	If Clause:
What would you do	if you worked harder?
What would you do	if you were a millionaire?

Be careful

- ❖ The 'if clause' uses the past simple form but the meaning is not the past.
- ❖ Do not use 'would' in the 'if clause' in present unreal conditional sentences.
Eg: If she **knew** the answer, she **would** tell you.
(Not: *If she would know the answer....*)
- ❖ Use 'were' for all subjects when the verb in the 'if clause' is a form of 'be'.
Eg: If I **were** rich, I **would travel** round the world.
(Not: *If I was rich.....*)

Usage Note

- ❖ In the second conditional the form 'was' is not considered grammatically correct in written or testing language. You should use 'were', however in everyday conversation 'was' is often used.

Eg: if she **were** rich, she **would buy** a beautiful car.

- ❖ Statements beginning with 'If I were you ...' are used to give an advice.
Eg: If I were you I would read Peanuts, it is really funny.

4- Third Conditional (Conditional Type 3)

Third conditional (Conditional Type 3) is a structure used to talk about conditions and results that never happened.

'If clause' refers to an unreal past condition whereas the 'result clause' presents an imagined and probable past result of that condition.

AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENTS	
<i>If Clause: Past Perfect</i>	Result Clause: Would have+ Past participle.
If I had had money,	I would have moved away.

NEGATIVE STATEMENTS	
If Clause: Past perfect in negative form	Result Clause: would+not+have+PP
If I had not had money,	I would not have moved.

YES/NO QUESTIONS	
Result Clause:	If Clause:
Would you have left	if you had had money?

SHORT ANSWERS	
AFFIRMATIVE	NEGATIVE
Yes, I would have.	No, I would not have.

WH-QUESTIONS	
Result Clause	If Clause
What would you have done	If you had had money?

Grammar Explanation

❖ You can also use **modals** in the result clause.

Eg: If George had gone to university, he **might have become** an architect.

If George **had become** an architect, he **could have designed** bridges.

❖ Third conditionals are often used to express regret about what happened in the past.

Eg: If I **had known** Mary was back, I **would have invited** her to the party.

(I regret that I did not invite her)

General Notes

✓ **Contraction form**

Will not= **Won't**

Would have= **would've**

Would not have= **wouldn't have**

✓ **Punctuation**

Use a **comma** between the two clauses only when the *'if clause'* comes first.

You can begin conditional sentences with the *'if clause'* or the *'result clause'*, the meaning is the same only punctuation differs.

Eg: **If I had** more money, I would move.

Or: I would move **if I had money**.

✓ **If** can be replaced by '*unless*' which means '*if.....not*'.

Unless he hurries up (if he doesn't hurry up), he will arrive late.