

CONDITIONALS

A. Introduction

Read the following sentences:

1. I'll help you if you promise to work hard.
 2. If I had the money, I would lend it to you.
 3. If we had practised well, we could have won the match.
 4. Most dogs snarl if you pull their tail.
- You notice that all the above sentences have two parts - a main clause and a subordinate clause.

I'll help you

if you promise to work hard.

Main Clause

Subordinate Clause

- All the subordinate clauses in the above sentences begin with 'if'.
- Both the clauses express conditions, i.e., one event follows from the other, or depends on the other. In other words, what we express in the main clause depends - or is conditional - on what we express in the subordinate (if) clause
- We can usually change the order of clauses in conditional sentences. eg. we can say: I'll help you if you promise to work hard. We can also say: If you promise to work hard, I'll help you.
- In general, we separate the two clauses by a comma if we begin with an 'if' clause. We don't use a comma when we begin with the main clause.

- Generally grammar books state that there are three types of conditionals. Examples 1, 2 & 3 given above represent the three types.
- In this unit, we will learn the use of the three types of conditionals. We will also learn the other forms and meaning.

B The Likely or Probable Conditional.

B.1 Read the following dialogue:

A. Will you take up the new job?

B. It depends. I'm negotiating with the firm. I must get a good pay package.

We can rewrite B's response in a sentence using 'if' and 'I'll'

B: *I'll take up the new job if I get a good pay package.*

Some more examples:

- If the weather conditions worsen, planes will be diverted from Delhi.
- I'll help you with your assignment if you help me clean my room.

Basic Form of the Likely or Probable Conditional

If + present tense

Subordinate Clause
If it doesn't rain,

future form

Main Clause
we'll play a match.

Other Forms of the Likely or Probable Conditionals

- if + present

If you go out

imperative

do not forget to bring the grocery

- if + present

If the management does not accede to our demands, we are extending our strike to an indefinite period.

present continuous

- if + present
continuous

If you are looking for the Principal, you'll find him in the auditorium.

future form

- if + present perfect

If you have finished reading, I'll switch the light off.

future form

- if + present

If you feel hot, you may open the window.

may/ might, must,
should, can

We can also sometimes use 'should' in place of 'if' in more formal contexts:

Should the inflation continue to rise, the Reserve Bank of India will increase the interest rates.

B.2 Follow the patterns discussed in B1 and write sentences using the ideas in the table below. You will need to match the items first.

| A | B |
|---------------|---------------|
| go/ walk | enough/ money |
| write/ letter | weather/ fine |
| go/ cinema | get/ ticket |
| go/ shopping | (not) go/ out |
| pass exams | enough/ work |

I'll go for a walk if the weather is fine.

Underline the pair of verbs in each of the Conditional sentences you have written above, and say which tense they are in.

B.3 Complete the following conditional sentences using the clues given.

1. I'll take you out in the evening if
(let/ do/ work/ now - persuasion)
2. If you travel without reservation,
(be/ ask/ to get off the train-warning)

3. If you insult my brother again,
(complain/ to/ the principal - threat)
4. If the rain continues to be heavy, (school sports day/ be/ cancel- possibility)
5. If he exercises regularly (lose weight -ability)
6. If your claims are in order, (get a refund -possibility)
7. If you've completed your project, (leave at once- permission)
8., if you want me to give you good marks.
(improve/ handwriting -command)
9. If you meet my sister, _____? (you/ ask/ her/ call/ me- request)

C. The 'Unreal' or 'Hypothetical' Conditional.

C.1 Read the imaginary situations given below and complete the sentence that describes the situation in each case. One has been done for you as an example.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>You have always wanted to be the owner of a five-star hotel. What would you do if you won a million rupees?</p> | <p>If I won a million rupees, I would build a five-star hotel.</p> |
|---|--|

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Shikha is in her farm-house. During her morning walk one day, she narrowly escapes being bitten by a snake. What do you think would happen if she was bitten by a snake?</p> | <p>If Shikha was _____ _____ _____ _____</p> |
| <p>2 I have misplaced the book Ajay gave me on my birthday. I must find it. If I lost the book, how would Ajay feel?</p> | <p>Ajay would _____ _____ _____ _____</p> |
| <p>3 Mira might win an air-ticket to Europe. She has been dreaming of going to England. Where do you think you would go if you won an air-ticket?</p> | <p>If I _____ _____ _____ _____</p> |
| <p>4 Hema has gained weight. The doctor has advised her to do her exercises regularly. The doctor thinks:</p> | <p>If she _____ _____ _____ _____</p> |
| <p>5 Delhi Textile Mill is planning to close down its factory. As a consequence, many workers would lose their jobs. The Workers' Union wants it to stay open and says to the management:</p> | <p>If _____ _____ _____ _____</p> |
| <p>6 Your friend Mani parks his scooter in the lane outside. You fear that it will be stolen one day if he continues to park it there. So you ask him:</p> | <p>What would you do _____ _____ _____ _____</p> |

Underline the pairs of verbs used in each of the sentences you have written above. Now state below what tenses they are in.

C.2 Complete the sentences below in the same pattern as in the example, choosing the words from the box.

If I were rich, I would open schools for small children.

- the Principal of my school
- God
- the Environment Minister
- tall
- hardworking

1. If I were _____

2. If I were _____

3. If I were _____

4. If I were _____

5. If I were _____

C.3 Basic Form of the 'Unreal' conditional.

if + past tense

would + bare infinitive

if clause

main clause

If I got an invitation, I'd attend the wedding.

Other Forms

- might and could may be used instead of would in the main clause.

e.g.: *If you worked hard, you would succeed* (certain result)

If you worked hard, you might succeed (possible result)

If you worked hard, you could succeed (ability)

- We sometimes use *were + infinitive* instead of the past tense form in the if clause. This tends to make the statement more tentative and therefore more polite: If the Yamuna were to rise above the danger mark, there would be no alternative but to close down the bridge.
- When we use 'were' in the if clause, we can invert 'were' and the subject of the clause and leave out 'if' altogether:

Were he honest, I might feel some sympathy for him.

- We can also use continuous conditional form instead of the simple conditional form:

If I were on holiday, I would/ might be touring Switzerland.

D. The Impossible Conditional

D.1 Read the following sentence:

If we had played well, we would have won.

(Did they play well? Did they win?)

Such a conditional is used to speculate about past events. It is also used to express reproach or regret.

If you hadn't misled me, I would have attended the interview.

D.2 Basic Form

If + past perfect

would + have + past participle

If they had brought the man to the hospital immediately after the accident, his life would have been saved.

Construct sentences in the above pattern using the clues given:

1. We wasted time. We missed the train.

2. He did not take the advice of his accountants. He lost a lot of money.

3. There was an accident on the way. I did not reach the office in time.

D.3 Other Forms

1. 'Could' or 'might' may be used instead of 'would':

If we had found enough capital, we could have saved our business. (ability)

If we had found enough capital, we might have saved our business.
(possibility)

2. We can use had + subject + past participle and write a conditional sentence without 'if'

Had I known the entry to the show was free, I would have attended it with my family.

D.4 Read the passage below, about an electric car. Then, with a partner, list its weaknesses. When you have finished, your teacher will discuss them with you and write them on the board.



Some years ago, a three-wheeled electric car was launched by Hindustan Electric Company. Although it was a revolutionary vehicle, it was a commercial disaster. The Company did very little research, but believed the product would be successful. The car did not have a very powerful engine, so it was not very fast. As a result it did not appeal to adults. However, even though it was small and slow, the car was not suitable for children either. It did not appear to be safe to use on the road because it was so small. It was also very expensive. The Company had to stop production, after losing millions of rupees.

Because so many things were wrong with the car, it was impossible for the company to sell it successfully. The company should have been more careful.

Read the clues below and say what the company should have done/ should not have done in order to produce a more successful car.

1. (carry out) (proper market research) (realise) (success)

If the company had carried out proper market research, it would have realised the car would not be a success.

2. (powerful) (fast)

If the car engine had been _____

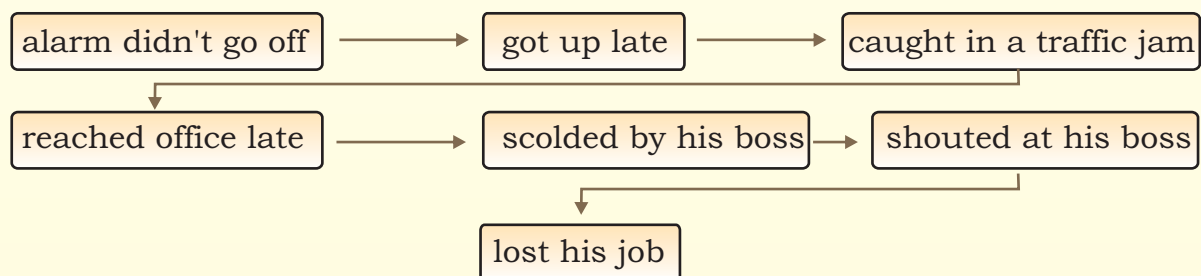
3. (expensive) (suitable)

If _____

4. (size) (safety) _____

If _____

D.5 Ashok had a terrible day yesterday. Look at the chain of events that happened to him.



Now he is lying in bed thinking of what might have happened if.....

Use the type of sentence you used in the last exercise to write down his thoughts. Start like this:

"If the alarm had gone off, I wouldn't have got up late. If I hadn't _____

Underline the pairs of verbs in each of the sentences you have written above.

E. Zero Conditional Sentences to Express a General Truth.

E.1 In pairs, complete the sentences below as shown in the example:

If (= when)

water is heated to 100°C (at STP) it boils.

OR

Water boils

if (when) it is heated to 100°C (at STP).

1. If you do not regularly oil the moving parts of a bicycle, _____

2. _____ when
you leave the kettle for too long.
3. When the tectonic plates of the earth's crust move, _____

4. _____ if you
press the FF> button on a cassette player.
5. If a plant does not get enough sunlight, _____

E.2 Underline the pair of verbs used in each of the conditional sentences you have written above, and say what tense they are in.

F. Conditionals without 'IF'

Tick the correct option from the words in italics. Think carefully.

1. We will go to Changu Lake on Saturday *provided that/ unless* the weather is fine.
2. *Unless/ As long as* the shop gives a good discount we will place our order with them.

3. *Unless/ If* we look into his complaints the situation is going to get worse.
4. *Provided that/ Unless* you avoid the bandits, they will kill you.
5. *Unless/ As long as* peace is what all governments want, we should all learn the art of peace-making.

Make similar sentences using the clues given below. Do not use if.

1. children - receive love (develop)
2. people - eat well, exercise (healthy)
3. examination - on time (waste a year)
4. movie - short, interesting (hit)
5. journal - useful, attractive (popular)

As long as _____

Unless _____

Providing _____

Unless _____

Provided that _____

G. Conditionals - Summary

Match the phrases from columns A and B to form meaningful sentences. Rewrite them in the space provided below. The first one has been done for you.

| A | B |
|---|---|
| 1. If I save enough money, | a. let me know |
| 2. I will come over to your place | b. unless I get up early tomorrow. |
| 3. As long as you pay, | c. if you had warned me about the pollution. |
| 4. If you need money, | d. I would run a charity home. |
| 5. I'll miss my flight | e. provided I win this race. |
| 6. If I were rich, | f. provided that I have finished my homework. |
| 7. I shall be selected for the Olympics | g. if you had worked harder. |
| 8. I wouldn't have gone for a swim | h. I may go to America this summer. |
| 9. If you put salt in water, | i. it dissolves |
| 10. You would probably have passed the exam | k. you can be a member of the club. |

1. If I save enough money, I may go to America this summer.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____