

Conditionals

What are Conditionals?

Conditionals are sentences used in English to

1. Predict what could happen
2. Guess what might have happened but didn't
3. Wish what would happen

If you read this book, you will gain a lot of knowledge.
Smitha could have joined us if you had informed her on time.
Unless he owns up to his mistake, we cannot take him back on the team.

Characteristics of Conditionals

- They are complex sentences comprising a main clause and a dependent clause.

If my parents let me, I will join you for the movie.

Dependent clause

Main clause

- The dependent clause starts with 'If... ' and is also known as an 'if clause'.

If time permits, we can watch a movie.

- They are made with different tenses.

If you keep the door open, the cat will run out.

Simple present tense

Simple future tense

- In the case of negative sentences, 'unless' is used instead of 'if'.

Unless he owns up to his mistake, the team will not take him back.

Negative clause

Types of Conditionals

There are **four types** of conditionals in English.

- Zero conditional
- First conditional
- Second conditional
- Third conditional

Zero Conditional

- The zero conditional is used for expressing general truths.
- The result of a zero conditional is always true.
- The dependent clause and the main clause of a zero conditional are in the simple present tense.

If the snow melts, the roads become slippery.

Simple present tense

Simple present tense

More examples:

Dependent Clause	Main Clause
If Mahesh buys a car, If you fail to show up, If it rains,	his jealous neighbour also buys a car. the opportunity goes to someone else. little green shoots erupt out of the earth.

First Conditional

- The first conditional talks about possibilities in the present or the future.
- It speaks about things which may happen.
- The dependent clause is in the simple present tense and the main clause is in the simple future tense.

If he arrives in 10 minutes, we will apprise him of the matter.

Simple present tense

Simple future tense

More examples:

Dependent Clause	Main Clause
If you lead a simple life, If it rains, If you order now,	you will have no anxieties. we will need an umbrella. you will receive a free subscription for a year.

Second Conditional

- The second conditional talks about hypothetical or unreal situations in the present or in the future.
- It speaks about things which have a slim chance of happening.
- The dependent clause is in the simple past tense and the main clause is in the simple future tense.

If I had your sense of humour, I would consider a career in comedy.

Simple past tense

Simple future tense

More examples:

Dependent Clause

If we had the means,
If I were the Prime Minister,
If Manish had more time,

Main Clause

we would buy a car.
I would strive for the alleviation of poverty.
he would finish his paper.

Third Conditional

- The third conditional is used to express improbable situations in the past.
- It speaks of conditions in the past which didn't happen or are impossible.
- The dependent clause is in the past perfect tense and the main clause is in the future perfect tense.

If I had saved enough money, I would have bought that house.

Past perfect tense

Future perfect tense

More examples:

Dependent Clause

If she had informed us,
If they hadn't worked hard,
If the purse had been stolen,

Main Clause

we would have cancelled our plans.
they would not have won.
Manisha would have been left penniless.

Variations in Form

- The order of the clauses of the conditions can be changed. The sentence can start with the main clause and end with the dependent clause.

Krishna would have failed if Balram hadn't intervened on time.

Future perfect tense

Past perfect tense

- Sometimes, the order of the verbs and the nouns in the conditional sentence can also vary. In such cases, 'if' is optional.

Were I in your place, I would set the records straight.

Revision

	Usage	Dependent Clause	Main Clause
Zero Conditional	Facts	If + Simple Present	Simple Present
First Conditional	Possibilities	If + Simple Present	Simple Future
Second Conditional	Unreal Situations	If + Simple Past	Simple Future
Third Conditional	Improbable Situations	If + Past Perfect	Future Perfect

