

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES (IF CLAUSES)

The **conditional** is made with **would + infinitive** (without *to*). In the first person (singular and plural) **should** is possible instead of **would**: the meaning is the same: *I/we should/would return*.

The conditional gets its name from its use in sentences with **if**. However, this is not the only way we use the conditional. It is found:

- a) In sentences with **if**, and other similar words: *supposing war broke out, what would you do?*
- b) Instead of **shall** or **will** in reported speech after "past reporting" verbs: *she said she would be ok*
- c) To express the idea of "future in the past": *In London she met the man that she would one day marry*
- d) with verbs such as *like, prefer*, to make polite requests or offers: *I would like a cup of tea*

Do not confuse the conditional with other uses of would (past habits,)

Conditional sentences are usually made up of two parts, a conditional clause and a main clause. The conditional clause is the 'if' part of the sentence and the main clause is the result (what happens).

A conditional is used to talk about a possible or imaginary situation (the condition) and the consequences (or the result) of it.

Conditional 0 (100%) Situations that are always true if (**when/every time**) something happens.

The conditional 0 is used to express general truths and facts (often things based on scientific fact).

If you drop an apple, it falls. = An apple falls if you drop it. (absolute truth based on scientific fact: gravity).

Formation: Tense: **Simple present**

If you heat water to 100°C, it boils. Or: Water boils if you heat it to 100°C (it happens every time) BUT If you don't do your homework, I will be disappointed. - If you drop that egg, it will break (specific events).

In most zero conditional sentences "**when**" (*every time, whenever*) can be used instead of "**if**": *When it rains, my roof leaks. When my roof leaks, the walls get wet. When the walls get wet, they get mouldy. When they get mouldy, I get sick. When I get sick, I go to the doctor. When I go to the doctor, he always says the same thing, "Fix your roof!"*

Conditional 1 (less than 100%) **Never use will, or won't in the "if clause".**

It is used to express situations based on fact in the present or future (things which may happen). It is also called the "**real**" conditional because it is used for real/possible situations.

Formation: **Present simple** in the "if clause" followed by a comma and **will +verb** in the main clause. You can also put the main clause first without using a comma between the clauses.

If I have time today, I will phone my friend. = I will phone my friend if I have time today. (It is possible that I will have time - therefore the condition is real).

I'm not feeling very well. If it rains tomorrow, I'll stay at home.

I'm feeling fine. If it rains tomorrow, I might stay at home, or I may go shopping. I'll decide tomorrow.

Note: In the first conditional, there is no difference in meaning between **may** and **might**.

In conditional sentences, you don't always use '**if**' or '**if not**'. You can use **provided that, as long as, so long as, providing (that), on condition (that), only if** instead of '**if**':

You can borrow it provided that you give it back - You can go out as long as you promise to be home early

If/So long as/Provided that you drop the gun, I won't call the police. (Provided that is more formal than if.)

We often use **unless** which means '**if ... not**': *Unless you hand in your homework, I won't mark it.*

Conditional 2 (near 0% but there is still hope) - **Never use would, or wouldn't in the "if clause".**

It is often called the "**unreal**" conditional because it is used for unreal/impossible/improbable situations. This conditional provides an imaginary result for a given situation. It is often used to express a wish.

Note: The verb '**to be**', when used in the 2nd conditional, is: '**were**'.

If he were here, I would be very happy (also, if he was here). - I would lower taxes if I were the President.

Formation: **Past simple** in the "if clause" followed by a comma - **would +verb** in the main clause.

If I were you, I wouldn't do that. = I wouldn't do that if I were you. (I am not you so the condition is unreal).

If I had time, I would go out. = I would go out if I had time. (I don't have time so the condition is unreal).

Type 1 and type 2

If we take the car, we'll have to pay for parking - If we took the car, we would have to pay for parking
Both sentences refer to a future action but in the second the action is less probable (quite likely we have already decided not to take the car).

Conditional 3 (never happens) - Never use would have, or wouldn't have etc in the if clause.

It is often referred to as the "**past**" conditional because it concerns only past situations with hypothetical results. Often used to express criticism or regret with would have, could have or should have.

Formation: past perfect in the "if clause" - comma - **would have + past participle** in the main clause.

*If he **had** known that, he **would have** stayed. - Jane would have found a new job if she had stayed in Boston.*

Type 2 and type 3

If you planned things properly, we wouldn't get into a mess (usually you don't plan)

If you had planned things properly, we wouldn't have got into a mess (you didn't plan)

You can mix type 2 and 3:

If you had planned things properly (but you didn't), we wouldn't be in this mess now (present situation)

If you hadn't left all these dirty dishes (but you did), the place would look a lot better (now)

If Bob were more sensible (in general), he would have worn a suit for the interview (but he didn't)

If I didn't have all this work to do (now), I would have gone out for the day (but I didn't)

Unless / as Long as etc. for the future

When you are talking about the future, do not use **will** after **unless / as Long as / so Long as / provided / providing**. Use a present tense:

I'm not going out unless it stops raining. (not unless it will stop)

Providing the weather is good, we're going to have a picnic tomorrow. (not providing the weather will be good)

EXERCISES

Fill in the gaps

1. When the sun _____ (go) down, it _____ (get) dark.
2. I _____ (go) shopping on the way home if I _____ (have) time.
3. If you _____ (heat) water, it _____ (boil).
4. If it _____ (be) a nice day tomorrow we _____ (go) to the beach.
5. Where _____ you (live) if you _____ (can) live anywhere in the world?
6. If you _____ (not smoke) so much you _____ (feel) a lot better.
7. If I _____ (win) a lot of money I _____ (buy) a big house in the country.
8. It _____ (light) up if you _____ (push) that button.
9. In January: If it _____ (snow) tomorrow I _____ (go) skiing. (It might snow tomorrow).
In August: If it _____ (snow) tomorrow I _____ (go) skiing. (It almost certainly won't snow tomorrow).
10. If Arsenal _____ (win) they _____ (be) top of the league.
11. If you _____ (study) properly, you _____ (not get) bad marks (usually you don't study)
12. If you _____ (study) properly, you _____ (not get) such bad marks (you didn't study)
13. If you _____ (book) (*but you didn't*), we _____ (have) to wait now (present situation)
14. If you _____ (do) the washing-up (*but you did not*), the kitchen _____ (be) a lot tidier (now)
15. If Lola _____ (be) more generous (*in general*), she _____ (give) some money to that beggar (*but she didn't*)
16. If I _____ (not have) all this work to do (*now*), I _____ (go) to the cinema with my friends (*but I didn't*)
17. They _____ (buy) a new house if they _____ (be) richer.
18. I _____ (*buy*) some Cheddar cheese, if I _____ (go) to England.
19. Unless you _____ (hand in) your homework, I _____ (mark) it.
20. The universities _____ probably (accept) the proposal as long as the government _____ (provide) sufficient funding.
21. If it _____ (be) sunny, we _____ (can go) out
22. You _____ (fail), if I _____ (help) you.

Fill in the gaps:

1. Murphy's law: if anything can go wrong it _____
2. If you _____ (be) in a supermarket and you change queue, the queue you were in before _____ (move) faster.
3. If you _____ (wash) your car, it _____ (rain).
4. If you _____ (find) something in a shop that you really like, they _____ (not have) it in your size.
5. If someone near you is smoking, the smoke _____ (go) directly towards you.
6. If you _____ (stop) waiting for the bus and _____ (start) walking, the bus _____ (come).
7. If you _____ (arrive) at the station and a train is just leaving, it _____ (be) your train.
8. If it is raining, or cold or both the bus _____ (be) late
9. If you _____ (be) early the bus _____ (be) late If you _____ (be) late the bus _____ (be) early
10. If your toast _____ (fall) on the floor, it _____ (fall) on the buttered side

Underline the correct tense:

1. If I could live anywhere, I will live/would have lived/would live in the country.
2. I'd phone the police if I am/were/had been you.
3. If I see/will see/had seen the others later on tonight, I ask/will ask/asked them if they want to go
4. It isn't costing/won't cost much if we all share/will share/would share the cost
5. I won't work/wouldn't work/wouldn't have worked if I didn't have to.
6. You would not have/would not have had the accident if you had been/have been more careful.
7. If I had/have a million pounds, I would probably buy a yacht.
8. If I have/had/had had the money, I would have bought the car.
9. If I knew/know, I would tell/would have told you
10. I will help/would have helped/would help you if you had asked me.

Fill in the gaps

- If you drop that egg, it _____ (break)
If you don't water those plants soon, they _____ (die)
If you are late again, you _____ (be fired)
Unless we get a pay rise, we _____ (go on strike)
If I had the time, I _____ (sleep) more
If they had more money, they _____ (buy) a house
If he didn't work so hard, he _____ (go out) more often
If you spoke English more often, you _____ (improve)
We would talk to him if he _____ (listen)
If I met Julia Roberts, I _____ (invite) her for dinner
They wouldn't be tired if they _____ (go) to bed earlier

Which is correct? If – when – unless – as long as – in case – even if – Although

- 1 I'll try to be on time, but don't worry if/when I'm late.
- 2 Don't throw that bag away. If/When you don't want it, I'll have it.
- 3 Please report to reception if/when you arrive at the hotel.
- 4 We've arranged to go to the beach tomorrow, but we won't go if/when it's raining.
- 5 Tanya is in her final year at school. She still doesn't know what she's going to do if/when she leaves.
- 6 What would you do if/when you lost your keys?
- 7 I hope I'll be able to come to the party, but I'll let you know if/unless I can't.
- 8 I don't want to be disturbed, so don't phone me if/unless it's something important.
- 9 Please sign the contract if/unless you're happy with the conditions.
- 10 I like travelling by ship as long as/unless the sea is not rough.
- 11 You might not remember the name of the hotel, so write it down if/in case you forget it.
- 12 it's not cold now, but take your coat with you if/in case it gets cold later.
- 13 Take your coat with you and then you can put it on if/in case it gets cold later.
- 14 They always have the TV on, even if/if nobody is watching it.
- 15 Even/Although I left home early, I got to work late.
- 16 Despite / Although we've known each other a long time, we're not particularly close friends.
- 17 'When did you leave school?' 'As/When I was 17.'
- 18 I think Ann will be very pleased as/when she hears the news .

Complete the sentences.

Example: Lisa is tired all the time. She shouldn't go to bed so late.

If Lisa *didn't* go to bed so late, she *wouldn't be* tired all the time.

2 It's getting late. I don't think Sarah will come to see us now.

I'd be surprised if Sarah _____ to see us now.

3 I'm sorry I disturbed you. I didn't know you were busy.

If _____ you were busy, I _____ you.

4 I don't want them to be upset, so I've decided not to tell them what happened.

_____ upset if I _____ them what happened.

5 The dog attacked you, but only because you frightened it.

If you _____ the dog, it
_____ you.

6 Unfortunately I didn't have an umbrella and so I got very wet in the rain.

I _____ so wet if _____ an umbrella.

7 Martin failed his driving test. He was very nervous and that's why he failed.

If he _____ so nervous, he
_____ the test.

KEY

1. When the sun **goes** down, it **gets** dark.
2. **I'll go** shopping on the way home if I **have** time.
3. If you **heat** water, it **boils**
4. If **it's** a nice day tomorrow **we'll go** to the beach.
5. Where **would you live** if you **could live** anywhere in the world?
6. If you **didn't smoke** so much **you'd feel** a lot better.
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8. It **lights up** if you **push** that button. Or It will **light up** if you **push** that button
9. In January: If **it snows** tomorrow **I'll go skiing**. It might snow tomorrow.
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19. Unless you **hand in** your homework, I **won't mark** it.
20. The universities **will** probably **accept** the proposal as long as the government **provides** sufficient funding.
21. If it **had been** sunny, we **could have gone** out
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Fill in the gaps:

1. Murphy's law: if anything can go wrong it **will**

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KEY 1 if 2 If 3 when 4 if 5 when 6 if 7 if 8 unless 9 if 10 as long as
 11 in case 12 in case 13 if 14 even if 15 Although 16 Although 17 When 18 when

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I _____ **wouldn't have got** _____ so wet if _____ **I had had** _____ an umbrella.

7 Martin failed his driving test. He was very nervous and that's why he failed.

If he _____ **hadn't been** _____ so nervous, he _____ **wouldn't have failed** _____ the test.

OR: would have passed _____ the test.

2 came 3 I'd known/I had known - wouldn't have disturbed 4 They'd be/They would be - told

5 hadn't frightened - wouldn't have attacked 6 wouldn't have got/wouldn't have gotten - I'd had/I had had

7 hadn't been / hadn't got / hadn't gotten - wouldn't have failed *or* would have passed