



ENGLISH GRAMMAR

Lesson 1



4 CONDITIONALS

The Zero Conditional

We can make a zero conditional sentence with two **present simple** verbs (one in the 'if clause' and one in the 'main clause'):

- If + present simple, present simple.

This conditional is used when the result will always happen. So, if water reaches 100 degrees, it always boils. It's a fact. I'm talking in general, not about one particular situation. The result of the 'if clause' is always the main clause.

The 'if' in this conditional can usually be replaced by 'when' without changing the meaning.

For example: If water **reaches** 100 degrees, it **boils**. (It is always true, there can't be a different result sometimes). If I **eat** peanuts, I **am** sick. (This is true only for me, maybe, not for everyone, but it's still true that I'm sick every time I eat peanuts)

Here are some more examples:

- If people **eat** too much, they **get** fat.
- If you **touch** a fire, you **get** burned.
- People **die** if they **don't eat**.
- You **get** water if you **mix** hydrogen and oxygen.
- Snakes **bite** if they **are** scared
- If babies **are** hungry, they **cry**



The First Conditional

The first conditional has the present simple after 'if', then the future simple in the other clause:

- if + present simple, ... will + infinitive

It's used to talk about things which might happen in the future. Of course, we can't know what will happen in the future, but this describes possible things, which could easily come true.

- If it **rains**, I **won't go** to the park.
- If I **study** today, I'll **go** to the party tonight.
- If I **have** enough money, I'll **buy** some new shoes.
- She'll **be** late if the train **is** delayed.
- She'll **miss** the bus if she **doesn't leave** soon.
- If I **see** her, I'll **tell** her.



First vs. Zero Conditional:

The first conditional describes a *particular* situation, whereas the zero conditional describes what happens *in general*.

For example (zero conditional): if you sit in the sun, you get burned (here I'm talking about every time a person sits in the sun - the burning is a natural consequence of the sitting)

But (first conditional): if you sit in the sun, you'll get burned (here I'm talking about what will happen today, another day might be different)



The Second Conditional

The second conditional uses the **past simple** after if, then 'would' and the infinitive:

- if + past simple, ...would + infinitive

(We can use 'were' instead of 'was' with 'I' and 'he/she/it'. This is mostly done in formal writing).

It has two uses.

First, we can use it to talk about things in the future that are probably not going to be true. Maybe I'm imagining some dream for example.

- If I **won** the lottery, I **would buy** a big house.(I probably won't win the lottery)
- If I **met** the Queen of England, I **would say** hello.
- She **would travel** all over the world if she **were** rich.
- She **would pass** the exam if she ever **studied**.(She never studies, so this won't happen)

Second, we can use it to talk about something in the present which is impossible, because it's not true. Is that clear? Have a look at the examples:

- If I **had** his number, I **would call** him. (I don't have his number now, so it's impossible for me to call him).
- If I **were** you, I **wouldn't go** out with that man.



How is this different from the first conditional?

This kind of conditional sentence is different from the first conditional because this is a lot more unlikely.

For example (second conditional): If I had enough money I would buy a house with twenty bedrooms and a swimming pool (I'm probably not going to have this much money, it's just a dream, not very real)

But (first conditional): If I have enough money, I'll buy some new shoes (It's much more likely that I'll have enough money to buy some shoes)



First vs. Second Conditional:

The first conditional describes things that I think are likely to happen in the future, whereas the second conditional talks about things that I don't think will really happen. It's subjective; it depends on my point of view.

For example (first conditional): If she studies harder, she'll pass the exam (I think it's possible she will study harder and so she'll pass)

But (second conditional): If she studied harder, she would pass the exam (I think that she won't study harder, or it's very unlikely, and so she won't pass)

vs Grammar

- In British English, we can use both *was* and *were* after *if* with first and third person singular. *Were* is more common in a formal style. In American English, it is usual to use *were*.
UK: If I **was/were** a gambler, I'd put money on Jim being late.
US: If I **were** a gambler, I'd put money on Jim being late.
- In both British and American English, *were* is usually used in the phrase *If I were you, ...*



The Third Conditional

We make the third conditional by using the **past perfect** after 'if' and then 'would have' and the **past participle** in the second part of the sentence:

- if + past perfect, ...would + have + past participle

It talks about the past. It's used to describe a situation that didn't happen, and to imagine the result of this situation.

- If she **had studied**, she **would have passed** the exam (but, really we know she didn't study and so she didn't pass)
- If I **hadn't eaten** so much, I **wouldn't have felt** sick (but I did eat a lot, and so I did feel sick).
- If we **had taken** a taxi, we **wouldn't have missed** the plane
- She **wouldn't have been** tired if she **had gone** to bed earlier
- She **would have become** a teacher if she **had gone** to university
- He **would have been** on time for the interview if he **had left** the house at nine



Complete the sentences by choosing the correct answer. You also need to say if the sentence is the zero or first conditional.

1. If I am sad, I watch / will watch a funny movie.
2. If it snows this winter, I build / will build a snowman.
3. If the coronavirus cases are lower in a month, I travel / will travel.
4. If I eat / will eat healthy this week, I will feel better.
5. If it rains, the street gets / will get wet.
6. If you don't put ice cream in the freezer, it melts / will melt.
7. If I go / will go to the party tonight, I won't stay long.
8. If you drink too much alcohol, you get / will get drunk.
9. If you exercise, you lose / will lose weight.
10. If they get / will get married, I will be very happy.



1st conditional: IF + PRESENT SIMPLE, WILL + infinitive

2nd conditional: IF + PAST SIMPLE, WOULD + infinitive

1. If I _____ (see) John, I _____ (tell) him your news.
2. You _____ (meet) my brother if you _____ (go) to town on Monday.
3. Meg sleeps only 5 hours a day. If she _____ (sleep) longer, her health _____ (improve) fast.
4. If she _____ (want) to talk to me, she _____ (ring up). I guess she doesn't.
5. If you _____ (need) help, my father _____ (help) you.
6. We _____ (have) a picnic if the day _____ (be) fine.
7. I _____ (understand) Mr. Brown if he _____ (speak) slowly.
8. If you _____ (see) a policeman, he _____ (show) you the way.
9. I _____ (finish) the job tomorrow if I _____ (can).
10. If you _____ (give) him good meals, he _____ (not be able) to work hard.
He would be too lazy to work then.



11. You _____ (make) a fortune if you _____ (take) my advice. Too bad!
12. I _____ (not need) an umbrella if it _____ (not rain).
13. If she _____ (think) it over carefully, she _____ (form) a clear opinion.
14. If they _____ (catch) a bus now, they _____ (arrive) at half past nine.
15. He _____ (find) the answers if he _____ (look) at the back of the book.
16. If I _____ (think) that about him, I _____ (say) so aloud.
17. If he _____ (promise) to behave in the future, his mum _____ (forgive) him.
18. If you _____ (want) me to, I _____ (come) for a walk with you.
19. If we _____ (can) come on Sunday, we _____ (come). I am really sorry.
20. If you _____ (wait) for a moment, the waiter _____ (bring) you a coffee.



Zero, first OR second Conditional

1. If I _____ (see) John, I _____ (tell) him your news tomorrow.
2. Meg sleeps only 5 hours a day. If she _____ (sleep) longer, her health _____ (improve) fast.
3. If you _____ (freeze) water, it _____ (turn) to ice.
4. If she _____ (want) to talk to me, she _____ (ring up). But she doesn't.
5. If you _____ (need) help with your car tomorrow, my father _____ (help) you.
6. We _____ (have) a picnic if the day _____ (be) fine.
7. I _____ (understand) Mr. Brown if he _____ (speak) slowly. But he doesn't.
8. If you _____ (see) a policeman, he always can _____ (show) you the way.
9. I _____ (finish) the job tomorrow if I _____ (can).
10. If I _____ (go) on a boat, I always _____ (feel) sick.



11. You _____ (make) a fortune if you _____ (take) my advice. Too bad that you never listen to me!
12. I _____ (not need) an umbrella if it _____ (not rain).
13. If they _____ (catch) a bus now, they _____ (arrive) at half past nine.
14. If he _____ (not/know) the word, he always _____ (look) in a dictionary.
15. She _____ (get) fit if she _____ (walk) every day 3 km. But she is too lazy.
16. If I _____ (think) that about him, I _____ (say) so aloud. But I don't actually.
17. If he _____ (promise) to behave well, his mum _____ (forgive) him in some time.
18. If you _____ (want) me to, I _____ (come) for a walk with you next weekend.
19. If we _____ (can) come on Sunday, we _____ (come). I am really sorry but we can't.
20. If you _____ (heat) water till 100°, it _____ (boil).



Put the verbs in brackets in the correct tense to form third conditional sentences.

1. If you _____ (listen) to the traffic report on the radio this morning, we _____ (not catch) up in this jam!.

2. If Martha _____ (not look) out of the window at that moment, she _____ (not spot) the criminals.

3. If I _____ (not miss) the end of the film, I _____
_____ (know) who the murderer was.

4. I _____ (phone) you yesterday if I _____
_____ (not lose) your number.

5. We _____ (go) to the cinema _____
_____ (not already see) the film.

6. If I _____ (not see) it with my own eyes, I _____
_____ (not believe) it.

7. If Eileen _____ (not take) that job in that American company, she
_____ (regret) it.



8. If your sister _____ (be) with us, she _____
_____ (not get) herself lost.

9. Hector _____ (not meet) his wife if he _____
_____ (go) to Tahiti.

10. John's father _____ (buy) him car if he _____
_____ (pass) all the exams.

11. The burglar _____ (break) into our house if one of my
neighbours _____ (not tip) off the police which caught
him just in time.

12. If Sam _____ (not know) about life any better, he _____
_____ (be) a discontent person today.

13. Melissa _____ (have) some money now if she _____
_____ (spend) it all on clothes.

