

Lesson 55

Conditional Sentences

Conditional sentences consist of two parts: the condition (conditional clause) and the consequence of this condition (the result clause). The conditional part most often begins with the word «if». The two parts of a conditional sentence can follow in any order: the conditional clause can be stated first, then the consequence (the result clause), or vice versa. The order of the sequence does not affect the meaning of the message. However, there is a syntactic rule: the order affects the placement of the comma in the sentence. If the conditional clause comes first in the sentence, it is separated by a comma. If the consequence (the result clause) comes first, a comma is not needed:

If I see Gordon tomorrow, I will tell him about it.

I will tell Gordon about it if I see him tomorrow.

The part with «if» (conditional clause) is considered as a subordinate clause, so questions in such constructions are asked about the result clause of the sentence, that is, about the consequence:

Will you tell Gordon about it if you see him tomorrow?

There are 5 types of conditional sentences in English. They differ in the nature of the conditions in the sentence and are formed using different grammatical rules. They are:

1. Zero Conditional
2. First Conditional
3. Second Conditional
4. Third Conditional
5. Mixed Conditional

1. Zero Conditional

In such constructions, «if» has minimal effect on the grammatical form of the verb. Such sentences point to generally accepted truths, scientific facts, instructions, guidelines, descriptions of laws etc. The formation scheme of such sentences is the simplest. Most often, the verb here is put in the Present Simple tense in both parts of the sentence:

If you take the ice out of the refrigerator, it melts.

If you click on this icon, the dialogue box appears.

If I wake up at 6 o'clock, I feel awful.

The typical verb form for the Zero Conditional is the Present Simple. However, not only the Present Simple can be used here. Other present tenses can also be used to describe the established order of things. The

choice of a specific verb form depends on the stage (phase) of the event. For example, when it is necessary to emphasize the process of performing an action, the Continuous form is used:

If you are driving a car, you need to be very attentive.
You need to be very attentive if you are driving a car.

When talking about a perfect action (result), the Perfect form is used:

If you have heard an alarm, you should leave the place immediately.
You should leave the place immediately if you have heard an alarm.

The result clause of the Zero Conditional often uses the modal verbs: can, may, might, should, must:

You can't drive a car if you don't have a license.
If you drink green tea, you may lower your blood sugar.
If the bus delayed, Julie might be worried.
If John is unhappy, he should look for a new job.
If Lucy is still at work, she must be finishing the report.

Imperative Zero Conditional:

If you have a headache, take some Paracetamol.
If you discover a fire, call the fire brigade immediately.
If you get lost, ask someone for help.

In the Zero Conditional you can use the construction «will be + verb-ing». In this case, «will» does not indicate the future tense, but rather what we are sure of in the present tense:

If they are eating lunch, they will be eating rice.
If Lucy is at home, she will be reading.

- ❖ Remember that the zero conditional can't be used to refer to a particular time, like the future or the past. It's only used for general facts.

Present Simple	If it rains, the river floods.
Present Continuous	If I am working, I don't call my friends.
Present Perfect	If she hasn't eaten lunch, she has no energy in the afternoon
Present Perfect Continuous	If the children have been eating chocolate, they jump all over the house

Interrogative Zero Conditional:

When using interrogatives in Zero Conditional, you need to pay attention to which verb is used in the main clause (the result clause):

Does the ice melt if I take it out of the refrigerator?
Should I leave the place immediately if I have heard an alarm?

In Zero Conditional sentences there is no element of assumption. They only state facts that occur and are of an obligatory nature. The conjunction «if» in such constructions can be replaced by the conjunction «when»:

When you have heard an alarm, you should leave the place immediately.
When you are driving a car, you need to be very attentive.
When you click on this icon, the dialogue box appears.
When I wake up at 6 o'clock, I feel awful.

In Zero Conditional, you can also replace «if» with «every time» if the sentences describe habits and imply repetitive actions:

Every time I wake up at 6 o'clock, I feel awful.

2. First Conditional

The First Conditional is used to talk about things which are possible in the present or the future – things which may happen:

If I see Gordon tomorrow, I will tell him about it.
If it's sunny, we shall go to the park.
I will pass the exam if I work hard.
If she is sleeping, I will wake her up.

In the conditional clause we use Present Tense, and in the result clause we use Future Tense. Note that «if» is never followed by a future tense verb. One of the main differences between the First and Zero Conditional is that in the First Conditional the conjunction «if» cannot be replaced by «when» without changing the meaning. That is, when using the conjunction «when», the sentence takes on the connotation of the speaker's confidence that the event will happen:

When I see Gordon, I will tell him about it.

The result clause of the First Conditional also uses the modal verbs: can, may, might, should, must:

If we hurry up, we can catch the last train.

If you finish all your work today, you may have a day off tomorrow.
 If she wants to get this job, she should be ready to work hard.
 If it rains, you must stay at home.
 If it rains tomorrow, I might stay at home, or I may go shopping.

❖ In the First Conditional, the imperative mood can also be used in the result clause:

If you see her, send my regards.

Present Simple	If I see you later, I will tell you an interesting story.
Present Continuous	If you are looking for Molly, you'll find her upstairs in her room. If you are staying for the weekend, we'll go to the cinema.
Present Perfect	If I have played football, I will be tired.
Present Perfect Continuous	If it has been raining for 2 hours, you will have to put on a jacket.

3. Second Conditional

The Second Conditional describes unreal situations in the present or future, the probability of which is very small:

If we had a garden, we could have a cat.
 If I had a thousand years to live, I would become an expert in many spheres.
 If I won a lot of money, I'd buy a big house in the country.
 If I lived in Italy, I wouldn't try to spend every holiday at the seaside.
 If I saw Gordon, I would tell him about it.
 If I saw mister President on the street, I wouldn't know what to think.
 If I were a child, I would probably be at school at this time of day.
 If I were a child, I would have to be at school at this time of day.
 If I were you, I wouldn't behave like this.
 If I were a king, I would live in this palace.
 We would be friends if Carol were a little more optimistic.
 If I were you, I wouldn't worry. = I wouldn't worry if I were you.
 If she was prime minister, she would invest more money in schools.

The structure of the Second Conditional is usually: if + past simple >> + would + infinitive.

The result clause of the Second Conditional uses the modal verbs: could, might, have to (after «would»):

I could become a star if I were luckier. (ability)
 If I knew her phone number, I could call her. (ability)
 If we had more money, we might stop work. (possibility)
 If I had time, I would have to go to the gym. (obligation, expressing necessity)
 If no one was late, we could start the meeting on time. (ability)
 If you asked George, he might be able to help you. (possibility)

Past Simple	If I won the lottery, I would buy a big house.
Past Continuous	If it wasn't raining, we would have lunch outside.
Past Perfect	If I had seen her, I would have had to speak to her.

4. Third Conditional

The Third Conditional is used to express regret for actions taken or not taken, or to criticize events that have occurred. The structure of the third conditional sentences is usually: If + past perfect >> would have + past participle:

If I had understood the instructions properly, I would have passed the exam.
 We wouldn't have got lost if my phone hadn't run out of battery.
 If I had known it in advance, I wouldn't have said such things.
 If I had called him that day, we would have solved this problem.

The Third Conditional can be constructed in English in the form of inversion, that is, using the reverse word order. To do this, the conjunction «if» is omitted from the conditional clause, and the verb «had» is placed in the first position in the sentence:

Had I called him that day, we would have solved this problem.

The result clause of the First Conditional also uses the modal verbs: could, might, should, had to:

If we had hurried up, we could have caught the last train.
 If you had finished all your work, you might have had a day off today.
 If you had followed the map, we should have found the restaurant.
 If she had wanted to get this job, she had to be ready to work hard.

5. Mixed Conditional

The Mixed Conditional combines different types of conditional sentences. However, not all types, but only the Second and Third Conditionals. The Mixed conditional sentences refer to an unreal present situation and its probable (but unreal) past result:

If I had worked harder at school, I would have a better job now.

I would have a better job now if I had worked harder at school.

If we had looked at the map we wouldn't be lost.

We wouldn't be lost if we had looked at the map.

If you had caught that plane you would be dead now.

You would be dead now if you had caught that plane.

In the Mixed Conditional, one of the parts - the conditional clause or the result clause - refers to the past. The Mixed conditional sentences can be divided into two types:

1. A combination of Second Conditional in the condition and Third Conditional in the consequence.

If I were clever enough, I wouldn't have done this.

2. A combination of Second Conditional in the consequence and Third Conditional in the condition.

If I had won that lottery, I would now live in France.

Conditionals Table

Type	Condition	Result
Zero Conditional	If + Present	Present
First Conditional	If + Present	Future
Second Conditional	If + Past	Would + Infinitive
Third Conditional	If + Past Perfect	Would + Present Perfect
Mixed Conditional	If + Past	Would + Present Perfect
	If + Past Perfect	Would + Infinitive

TEST

1. If I _____ too much, I feel terrible.
 - a) slept
 - b) will sleep
 - c) sleep

2. If we _____ our flight, we would be at home now.
 - a) hadn't missed
 - b) didn't miss
 - c) haven't missed

3. If she _____ free today, she would go to an art gallery.
 - a) would be
 - b) were
 - c) will be

4. If I were you, I _____ English when I was at school.
 - a) had studied
 - b) would have studied
 - c) would study

5. If you _____ to be fit, you should exercise more.
 - a) would want
 - b) will want
 - c) want

6. If you come late, you _____ the presentation.
 - a) will miss
 - b) missed
 - c) would miss

7. She would be very tired if she _____ work 10 hours a day.
 - a) had to
 - b) has to
 - c) would have to

8. If you could do anything in the world, what _____?
 - a) do you do

- b) would you do
 - c) will you do
9. If I lived by the sea, I _____ swimming every day.
- a) would go
 - b) will go
 - c) would went
10. If he were taller he _____ playing basketball.
- a) would start
 - b) will start
 - c) started
11. When he _____ to town, we have lunch together.
- a) comes
 - b) will come
 - c) came
12. I will not clean the flat unless you _____ me.
- a) helps
 - b) will help
 - c) help
13. If I don't know the word, I _____ in the dictionary.
- a) would look it up
 - b) looked it up
 - c) look it up
14. If I had had a lot of money, I _____ a house last year.
- a) would buy
 - b) had bought
 - c) would have bought
15. We will go to the café after you _____ your homework.
- a) will do
 - b) do
 - c) did

16. If I knew his address, I _____ him.
- a) visited
 - b) would visit
 - c) had visited
17. If Sue _____ anybody the news, it won't be a secret.
- a) tells
 - b) had told
 - c) told
18. If Tom _____ the bus, he would have come to the meeting on time.
- a) hasn't missed
 - b) missed
 - c) hadn't missed
19. If I see Jill, I _____ her to call you.
- a) would remind
 - b) will remind
 - c) has reminded
20. If I were you, I _____ the red dress.
- a) had chosen
 - b) would choose
 - c) choose
21. If she had been taking care of her health, she _____ ill.
- a) wouldn't have fell
 - b) didn't fall
 - c) wouldn't have fallen
22. We will stay at this hotel provided it _____ much.
- a) doesn't cost
 - b) didn't cost
 - c) hadn't cost