

# RULES

Conditional sentences have two parts: the **conditional clause** and the **main (result) clause**.

**Conditional Clause    Main (result) Clause**

**ZERO CONDITIONAL – true in the present**

<b>If + present tense / modal</b>	<b>Present Simple / modal</b>	facts, truths, habitual results in the present	<b>If I <b>work</b> in the garden, I <b>get</b> backache. She <b>can get</b> sick if she <b>eats</b> tomatoes.</b>
-----------------------------------	-------------------------------	--	--

**FIRST CONDITIONAL – possible in the present / future**

<b>If + Present Simple</b>	<b>future</b>	real situations with possible outcomes in present and future	<b>If she <b>keeps</b> calm, she'll <b>pass</b> the test. Paul <b>won't win</b> if he <b>doesn't train</b>.</b>
<b>If + Present Simple</b>	<b>modal</b>	ability, possibility, advice (depending on the meaning of the modal)	<b>If we <b>arrive</b> early, we <b>can have</b> lunch. If you <b>need</b> to lose weight, you <b>must eat</b> less bread.</b>
<b>If + present tense</b>	<b>imperative</b>	emphasising different things depending on choice of tense	<b>If you <b>need</b> any help, just <b>phone</b> me. (instructions)</b> <b>If you <b>have read</b> the book, <b>give</b> it back to me. (emphasising completion)</b>
<b>If + present tense</b>	<b>future</b>		<b>If you're <b>coming</b> tonight, <b>will</b> John <b>be coming</b> too? (checking intention / plan)</b> <b>If you <b>are looking for</b> June, you'll <b>find</b> her in her office. (talking about the present)</b>

**SECOND CONDITIONAL – unlikely / improbable in the present / future**

<b>If + Past Simple / Past Continuous</b> <i>Be</i> often takes the form <i>were</i> for all persons; <i>was</i> is more informal.	<b>would / could / might</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hypothetical, unreal situations</li> <li>hopes / regrets</li> <li>advice</li> </ul>	<b>If I <b>had</b> her number, I'd <b>phone</b> her. If I <b>were</b> invited for dinner I <b>might bring</b> Alan along. If I <b>were</b> taller, I <b>could become</b> a model. If we <b>didn't have to finish</b> this today, we <b>could go out</b>. If I <b>were</b> you, I <b>would marry</b> him.</b>
<b>If + were to + bare infinitive</b>	<b>would / could / might</b>	emphasising that the situation is unlikely (formal English)	<b>If he <b>were to apologise</b>, <b>would</b> you <b>forgive</b> him? (= if he <i>apologised</i>)</b>
<b>If + Past Simple / Past Continuous</b>	<b>Past Simple</b>	true or habitual actions in the past	<b>If he <b>ate</b> chocolate, he <b>got</b> stomach ache.</b>

**THIRD CONDITIONAL – impossible in the past**

<b>If + Past Perfect Simple / Past Continuous</b>	<b>would have / could have / might have</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>unfulfilled condition in the past</li> <li>satisfaction / regret over past action</li> </ul>	<b>If I <b>hadn't been waiting</b> for that flight, I'd <b>never have met</b> Tom. (but I was <i>waiting and we did meet</i>) If we <b>hadn't arrived</b> so late, we <b>might have got</b> tickets.</b>
<b>If + Modal Perfect</b>	<b>Modal Perfect</b>	hypothetical situation in the past	<b>If you <b>could have stayed</b> another day, I <b>would have taken</b> you to the sea. (but you <i>couldn't stay</i>)</b>

**MIXED CONDITIONALS**

<b>If + Past Simple / Past Continuous</b> (second conditional)	<b>would have</b> (third conditional)	hypothetical present connected with hypothetical past result	<b>If Jane <b>were</b> slightly taller, the model agency <b>would have accepted</b> her.</b>
<b>If + Past Perfect</b> (third conditional)	<b>would / could / might</b> (second conditional)	hypothetical past with hypothetical present result	<b>If the patient <b>hadn't been vaccinated</b> as a child, his life <b>would be</b> in danger now.</b>

**TEMPORAL CLAUSES – time word + present + future**

Clauses that begin with certain time expressions and carry a future meaning use similar structures to the first conditional. Time words include: *when, until, till, as soon / long as, the moment (that), after, before, once, by the time*.

**As soon as we arrive, we'll call you.**

**They will sit in the garden until it gets dark.**

## STYLE AND REGISTER

When the *if* clause precedes the main clause, it is followed by a comma. When the main clause begins the sentence, a comma is not required.

**Unless** can often replace *if ... not*. **Unless** is followed by a positive verb.

*If ... , then* is sometimes used to suggest that one action is dependent on another.

*If + will / won't* is used in polite / formal requests (refers to willingness or refusal).

*If + would* is also possible (even more formal)

**Should** can be used with *I* and *we* instead of *would* in the second conditional (considered formal).

**AmE Would** is commonly used in both clauses in informal American English.

*If + adjective* sometimes replaces *if + subject + be* in the first conditional.

*If in doubt* is used in formal language and written instructions.

*If so / If not* are shortened forms of conditional clauses and refer to previous statements.

*If + any / anything / ever*, etc. is used in questions or negative sentences and expresses doubt about the truth of something.

**Happen to / should happen to** shows chance / possibility.

**Were not for / had not been for** are used to show that one action depends on another.

**But for + noun / pronoun** is a shorter way of saying *were it not for / had it not been for* in formal English.

If you leave early, you will catch that train.  
You'll catch that train if you leave early.

You'll miss the train **unless** you **leave** at once. (= *if you don't leave*)  
She wouldn't come **unless** you **gave** her a lift.

If Tom can't visit us, **then** we'll have to visit him.

If you **will come** this way, please, I'll show you to your room.  
If you **won't be** quiet, I'll have to ask you to leave.  
If you **would like** to wait here, I'll call the manager.

If I lived abroad, I **should miss** my home terribly.

It **would be** better if they **would give** everyone an exact appointment.

If **possible**, let me know by Friday. (= *if it is possible*)  
If **necessary**, repeat the treatment two or three times.  
(= *if it is necessary*)

**If in doubt**, consult a doctor. (= *if you are in doubt*)

Are you coming to the party? **If so**, I'll give you a lift. (= *if you are coming*) **If not**, I'll see you next week.

There's little chance, **if any**, that he will recover. (= *if there is any chance at all ... which I doubt*)  
We're not doing anything special to celebrate. **If anything**, we may go out for dinner. (= *if we do anything at all*)

If you **happen to see** John, give him my regards.

If it **were not for** you, he wouldn't have his diploma.  
If it **hadn't been for** Sue, the company would have failed.

**But for** Sue, the company would have failed.

## INVERSION IN CONDITIONALS

We can make conditionals more formal by omitting *if* and starting the conditional clause with *should*, *were* or *had*.

First conditional	<b>Should you hear</b> anything, let me know.
Second conditional	<b>Were you to sign</b> the contract now, you could start working again.
Third conditional	<b>Had you made</b> him an offer, he might have accepted.

## CONDITIONAL SENTENCES WITHOUT *if*

- **Suppose / Supposing (that)** means *what if* and is followed by a question in the main clause.

First conditional	<b>Suppose he arrives</b> early, what will we do?
Second conditional	<b>Supposing he</b> suddenly <b>turned up</b> , what would you do?
Third conditional	<b>Supposing that</b> he <b>had come</b> by train, would he have arrived any earlier?

- **Otherwise** means *if not* and comes instead of a conditional clause.

We really must hurry. **Otherwise**, we'll miss our flight. (= *if we don't hurry*)

- **As long as / so long as / on condition (that) / providing (that) / provided (that)** express an idea of strong limitation.

You can take the car **as long as** you're back by midnight. He would come **on condition that** we gave him a lift.

- **In case** refers to conditions that may or may not happen. The **in case** clause can give the reason for the main clause. It can also refer to things we do in order to be ready for a future situation.

The policeman took a gun **in case** things got dangerous. Take a warm sweater **in case** it turns cold.

- **In case of** + noun is more formal and often used in instructions. It means *if there is*.

**In case of** fire, make for the nearest exit.