

What are conditionals in English grammar? Sometimes we call them 'if clauses'. They describe the result of something that might happen (in the present or future) or might have happened but didn't (in the past). They are made using different English verb tenses.

There are four kinds:

- **The Zero Conditional:** (if + present simple, ... present simple)  
If you heat water to 100 degrees, it boils.

We use the **zero conditional** to talk about things that are always true.

*If you heat water, it boils.*

*When the sun goes down, it gets dark.*

*It lights up if you push that button.*

The present simple is used in both clauses.

- **The First Conditional:** (if + present simple, ... will + infinitive)  
If it rains tomorrow, we'll go to the cinema.

We use the **first conditional** when we talk about real and possible situations.

*I'll go shopping on the way home if I have time.*

*If it's a nice day tomorrow, we'll go to the beach.*

*If Arsenal win, they'll be top of the league.*

In first conditional sentences, the structure is usually **if + present simple** and **will + infinitive**. It's not important which clause comes first.

- **The Second Conditional:** (if + past simple, ... would + infinitive)  
If I had a lot of money, I would travel around the world.

The **second conditional** is used to talk about 'unreal' or impossible things.

*If I won a lot of money, I'd buy a big house in the country.*

*Where would you live if you could live anywhere in the world?*

*If you didn't smoke so much, you'd feel a lot better.*

The structure is usually **if + past simple** and **would + infinitive**. It's not important which clause comes first.

- **The Third Conditional:** (if + past perfect, ... would + have + past participle)  
If I had gone to bed early, I would have caught the train.

**Third conditional** sentences describe the past. They describe something that **didn't happen**.

*If I'd studied harder at school I would have gone to university.*

He didn't study very hard and he didn't go to university.

*We wouldn't have got lost if you hadn't given me the wrong directions.*

She wasn't given the correct directions and she didn't find her way.

*She might have finished the exam if she'd had more time.*

She didn't finish the exam and she didn't have more time.

In third conditional sentences, the structure is usually **if + past perfect** and **would + perfect infinitive (e.g. have done)**. It's not important which clause comes first.

## All Conditionals

Finish the sentences with a clause in the correct conditional:

- 1: If it is sunny tomorrow \_\_\_\_\_
- 2: If you sit in the sun too long \_\_\_\_\_
- 3: If I were you \_\_\_\_\_
- 4: If I were the Prime Minister \_\_\_\_\_
- 5: If she had studied harder \_\_\_\_\_
- 6: If I won the lottery \_\_\_\_\_
- 7: If I hadn't gone to bed so late \_\_\_\_\_
- 8: If I hadn't come to London \_\_\_\_\_
- 9: If you mix water and electricity \_\_\_\_\_
- 10: If she hadn't stayed at home \_\_\_\_\_
- 11: If I go out tonight \_\_\_\_\_
- 12: If I were on holiday today \_\_\_\_\_
- 13: If I had listened to my mother \_\_\_\_\_
- 14: If I hadn't eaten so much \_\_\_\_\_
- 15: If it rains later \_\_\_\_\_
- 16: If I were British \_\_\_\_\_
- 17: If I were the opposite sex \_\_\_\_\_
- 18: If I have enough money \_\_\_\_\_
- 19: If you don't wear a coat in the winter \_\_\_\_\_
- 20: If I weren't studying English \_\_\_\_\_

Possible answers (check your answer is in the same tense):

- 1: If it is sunny tomorrow, we'll go to the park.
- 2: If you sit in the sun too long, you get burned.
- 3: If I were you, I would go out tonight.
- 4: If I were the Prime Minister, I would make the museums free.
- 5: If she had studied harder, she would have passed the exam.
- 6: If I won the lottery, I would buy a big house.
- 7: If I hadn't gone to bed so late, I wouldn't have been tired.
- 8: If I hadn't come to London, I would have gone to New York.
- 9: If you mix water and electricity, you get a shock.
- 10: If she hadn't stayed at home, she would have gone shopping.
- 11: If I go out tonight, I'll go to the cinema.
- 12: If I were on holiday today, I would go to the beach.
- 13: If I had listened to my mother, I wouldn't have caught a cold.
- 14: If I hadn't eaten so much, I wouldn't have felt sick.
- 15: If it rains later, I won't go out.
- 16: If I were British, I would speak perfect English.
- 17: If I were the opposite sex, I would grow a beard.
- 18: If I have enough money, I'll buy some new shoes.
- 19: If you don't wear a coat in the winter, you get sick.
- 20: If I weren't studying English, I would study French.