

Conditional Sentences

There are four types of conditional sentences. Each one has its structure.

(1) Zero Conditional Sentences

The zero conditional is often used to refer to general truths. The situation is **real and possible**. The tense in both parts of the sentence is the simple present. In zero conditional sentences, the word "if" can usually be replaced by the word "when" without changing the meaning.

If you **heat** ice, it **melts**.

If you **freeze** water, it **becomes** a solid.

If my husband **has** a cold, I usually **catch** it.

When people **smoke** cigarettes, their health **suffers**.

(2) First Conditional Sentences

It is possible and also *very likely* that the condition will be fulfilled.

Form: *if* + Simple Present, **will**+ infinitive

If I **study**, I **will pass** the exams.

If Ben **gets up** early, he **can catch** the bus.

If we **see** Ali tonight, we **shall tell** him to email you.

(3) Second Conditional Sentences

It is possible but *very unlikely*, that the condition will be fulfilled.

Form: *if* + Simple Past, **would** + infinitive

If I **studied**, I **would pass** the exams.

If you **insisted** on a goal, you **would get** it.

If she **had** more money, she **would travel** to the moon.

(4) Third Conditional Sentences

It is *impossible* that the condition will be fulfilled because it refers to the past.

Form: *if* + Past Perfect, **would** + **have** + Past Participle

If you **had told** me the truth, I **would have left** earlier.

If I **had cleaned** the house, I **could have gone** to the cinema.

If I **had found** his address, I **would have sent** him an invitation.

If not / Unless

If...not means the same as **unless**. Unless is used instead of if...not in conditional sentences of all types. The order of the clauses doesn't matter with sentences using unless.

Unless + Present Tense

Example:

1. *Children will be sick **if they don't stop** eating junk food.
Children will be sick **unless** they stop eating junk food.*
2. *I won't pay **if you don't** deliver the supplies immediately.
I won't pay **unless** you deliver the supplies immediately.*

Unless + Past Tense

Example:

1. *George wouldn't eat that meat **if he weren't** really hungry.
George wouldn't eat that meat **unless** he were really hungry.*
2. *Sarah would be here by now **if she wasn't** stuck in traffic.
Sarah would be here by now **unless** she was stuck in traffic.*

Unless + Past Perfect

Example:

1. *He would have been sick if he had not stopped eating junk food.
He would have been sick if he had not stopped eating junk food.*
2. *They would have killed Claudia **if she hadn't** given them the handbag.
They would have killed Claudia **unless** she'd given them the handbag.*

Exercise 1

Fill in the blanks.

1. If they had been more careful, this
will not happen
would not happen
would not have happened
2. If you a little earlier, you could meet her.
arrive
arrived
had arrived

3. If you faster, you could have overtaken him.

run

ran

had run

4. If you call me names again, I you.

will hit

would hit

would have hit

5. If she didn't mend her ways, she in trouble.

will be

would be

would have been

6. If you had practiced well, you better performance.

can deliver

could deliver

could have delivered

7. If you good care of your health, you will not fall ill often.

take

took

had taken

8. If she a foreign language, she can find a better job.

speaks

spoke

had spoken

9. If childrencare during their formative years, they will develop behavior problems.

do not receive

did not receive

had not received

10. If you learned your lessons regularly, you higher marks.

will receive

would receive

would have received

11. You will lose weight if youyour consumption of fatty foods.

reduce
reduced
had reduced
12. If I more money, I could buy a car.
earn
earned
had earned

Exercise 2

Fill the gap in each sentence with unless or if.

1. He won't pay our suppliers ... they don't send the goods on Monday. i
2. We won't pay them they send the goods before Friday.
3. We're going for a bike ride this weekend..... it rains.
4. He won't come you invite him personally.
5. The meeting is on Friday at 10 o'clock.... you hear otherwise.
6. you hear otherwise, the meeting is on Friday at 10 o'clock.
7. Let's go out for dinneryou're too tired.
8. I'll accept the job the pay is too low.
9. I'll accept the jobthey offer me it. I

Exercise 3

Complete the Conditional Sentences by putting the verbs into the correct form.

1. If you (sent)this letter , she (receive)..... it .
2. If I (go).....this test, I (improve)my English.
3. Peggy (go) shopping if she (have)time in the afternoon.
4. Simon (go)to London if he (get) a cheap flight.
5. If they (study / not)harder, they (pass / not)the exam.
6. If it (rain) tomorrow, I (have to / not)water the plants.