

# THE CONDITIONAL

## ACTIVITY TYPE

Reading, Writing, Grammar,  
Exercises

## LANGUAGE FOCUS

The Conditional

## AIM

To learn and practice the conditional  
in English

## LEVEL

Intermediate, Advanced

## TIME

Minutes

## INTRODUCTION

After going through your regular review and teacher talk, tell the students that they're going to learn the use of conditional in English

## PREPARATION

Make one copy of the worksheet for each student

## PROCEDURE

Give one copy of the worksheet to each student.

Go through the grammar and exercises together.

## THE 'ZERO' CONDITIONAL

### 1. Form

In 'zero' conditional sentences, the tense in **both parts** of the sentence is the **simple present**:

#### IF CLAUSE (CONDITION)

#### MAIN CLAUSE (RESULT)

If + simple present

simple present

If you heat ice

it melts.

If it rains

you get wet

**NOTE:** The order of the clauses is not fixed - the 'if' clause can be first or second:

- *Ice melts if you heat it.*
- *You get wet if it rains.*

### 2. Function

In these sentences, the time is **now or always** and the situation is **real and possible**. They are used to make statements about the real world, and often refer to general truths, such as scientific facts.

### *Examples:*

- a. If you *freeze* water, it *becomes* a solid.
- b. Plants *die* if they *don't get* enough water.
- c. If my husband *has* a cold, I usually *catch* it.
- d. If public transport *is* efficient, people *stop* using their cars.
- e. If you *mix* red and blue, you *get* purple.

This structure is often used to give instructions, using the imperative in the main clause:

- If Bill *phones*, *tell* him to meet me at the cinema.
- *Ask* Pete if *you're* not sure what to do.

## TYPE 1 CONDITIONAL

### 1. Form

In a *Type 1* conditional sentence, the tense in the 'if' clause is the **simple present**, and the tense in the main clause is the **simple future**

#### IF CLAUSE (CONDITION)

If + **simple present**

If it rains

If you don't hurry

#### MAIN CLAUSE (RESULT)

**Simple future**

you will get wet

we will miss the train.

## 2. Function

In these sentences, the time is the **present or future** and the situation is **real**. They refer to a **possible condition** and its **probable result**. They are based on facts, and they are used to make statements about the real world, and about particular situations. We often use such sentences to give warnings:

- *If you don't leave, I'll call the police.*
- *If you don't drop the gun, I'll shoot!*

### *Examples:*

- If you *drop* that glass, it *will break*.
- Nobody *will notice* if you *make* a mistake.
- If I *have* time, *I'll finish* that letter.
- What *will you do* if you *miss* the plane?

NOTE: We can use modals to express the degree of certainty of the result:

- *If you drop that glass, it might break.*
- *I may finish that letter if I have time.*

## TYPE 2 CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

### 1. Form

In a *Type 2 conditional sentence*, the tense in the 'if' clause is the **simple past**, and the tense in the main clause is the **present conditional**:

#### IF CLAUSE

#### MAIN CLAUSE

If + **simple past**

**Present conditional**

If it rained

you would get wet

If you went to bed earlier

you wouldn't be so tired.

#### Present conditional, form

The present conditional of any verb is composed of two parts ~ the modal auxiliary *would* + the infinitive of the main verb (without 'to'.)

**Subject**

**would**

**infinitive without to**

She

would

learn

#### Affirmative

I

would

go

#### Negative

I

wouldn't

ask

### Interrogative\_

Would she come?

### Interrogative negative

Wouldn't they accept?

### Would: Contractions of would

In spoken English, **would** is contracted to 'd.

I'd	We'd
you'd	you'd
he'd, she'd	they'd

The negative contraction = *wouldn't*.

Example: *to accept*, Present conditional

Affirmative	Negative_	Interrogative_
I would accept	I wouldn't accept	Would I accept?
You would accept	You wouldn't accept	Would you accept?
He would accept	She wouldn't accept	Would he accept?
We would accept	We wouldn't accept	Would we accept?
You would accept	You wouldn't accept	Would you accept?
They would accept	They wouldn't accept	Would they accept?



## 2. Function

In these sentences, the time is **now or any time**, and the situation is **unreal**.

They are **not** based on **fact**, and they refer to an **unlikely or hypothetical**

**condition** and its **probable result**. The use of the past tense after 'if'

indicates **unreality**. We can nearly always add a phrase starting with

"but", that expresses the real situation:

- *If the weather **wasn't** so bad, we **would go** to the park (...but it is bad, so we can't go)*
- *If I **was** the Queen of England, I **would give** everyone £100. (...but I'm not, so I won't)*

Examples of use:

1. To make a statement about something that is not real at present, but is

possible:

*I **would visit** her if I **had** time. (= I haven't got time but I might have some time)*

2. To make a statement about a situation that is not real now and never

could be real:

*If I **were** you, I'd **give up** smoking (but I could never be you)*



*Examples:*

- a. If I *was* a plant, I *would love* the rain.
- b. If you really *loved* me, you *would buy* me a diamond ring.
- c. If I *knew* where she lived, I *would go* and see her.
- d. You *wouldn't need* to read this if you *understood* English grammar.
- e. *Would he go* to the concert if I *gave* him a ticket?
- f. They *wouldn't invite* her if they *didn't like* her
- g. We *would be able* to buy a larger house if we *had* more money

NOTE: It is correct, and very common, to say "If I **were**" instead of "If I **was**".

## TYPE 3 CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

### 1. Form

In a Type 3 conditional sentence, the tense in the 'if' clause is the **past perfect**, and the tense in the main clause is the **perfect conditional**:

#### IF CLAUSE

If + **past perfect**

If it had rained

If you had worked harder

#### MAIN CLAUSE

**Perfect conditional**

you would have got wet

you would have passed the exam.



### Perfect conditional ~ form

The perfect conditional of any verb is composed of two elements: *would*

+ the perfect infinitive of the main verb (= *have + past participle*):

Subject	would	perfect infinitive
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He	would	have gone...
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They	would	have stayed...
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### Affirmative

I	would	have believed ...
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### Negative

She	wouldn't	have given...
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### Interrogative

Would	you	have left...?
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### Interrogative negative\_

Wouldn't	he	have been...?
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Example: *to go*, Past conditional

### Affirmative

### Negative

### Interrogative

I would have gone	I wouldn't have gone	Would I have gone?
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You would have gone	You wouldn't have gone	Would you have gone?
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He would have gone    She wouldn't have gone    Would it have gone?  
We would have gone    We wouldn't have gone    Would we have gone?  
You would have gone    You wouldn't have gone    Would you have gone?  
They would have gone    They wouldn't have gone    Would they have  
gone?

In these sentences, the time is *past*, and the situation is *contrary to reality*.

The facts they are based on are the *opposite* of what is expressed.

Type 3 conditional sentences, are truly *hypothetical* or *unreal*, because it is now too late for the condition or its result to exist. There is always an unspoken "but..." phrase:

- If I *had worked* harder I *would have passed* the exam  
(but I didn't work hard, and I didn't pass the exam).
- If *I'd known* you were coming *I'd have baked* a cake  
(but I didn't know, and I haven't baked a cake).

NOTE: Both *would* and *had* can be contracted to *'d*, which can be confusing.

Remember that you **NEVER** use *would* in the *IF*-clause, so in the example above, "If I'd known" must be "If I *had* known", and "I'd have baked" must be "I *would* have baked.."

### *Examples:*

- a. If *I'd known* you were in hospital, I *would have visited* you.
- b. I *would have bought* you a present if *I'd known* it was your birthday.
- c. If *they'd had* a better goalkeeper they *wouldn't have lost* the game.
- d. If you *had told* me you were on the Internet, *I'd have sent* you an e-mail.
- e. *Would you have bought* an elephant if *you'd known* how much they eat?

## UNREAL PAST

The past tense is sometimes used in English to refer to an 'unreal' situation.

So, although the tense is the past, we are usually talking about the present, e.g. in a Type 2 conditional sentence:

*If an elephant and a mouse **fell** in love, they would have many problems.*

Although *fell* is in the past tense, we are talking about a hypothetical situation that might exist now or at any time, but we are **not** referring to the past. We call this use the **unreal past**.

Other situations where this occurs are:

- after other words and expressions like *'if* (*supposing, if only, what if*);



- after the verb *'to wish'*;
- after the expression *'I'd rather..'*

### Expressions like *'if'*

The following expressions can be used to introduce hypothetical situations:

- *supposing, if only, what if*. They are followed by a *past tense* to indicate that the condition they introduce is unreal:

- Supposing an elephant and a mouse *fell* in love? (= but we know this is unlikely or impossible)
- What if we *Painted* the room purple? (= that would be very surprising)
- If only *I had* more money. (= but I haven't).

These expressions can also introduce hypothetical situations in the past and then they are followed by the *past perfect*.

### *Examples:*

- If only I *hadn't kissed* the frog (= I did and it was a mistake because he turned into a horrible prince, but I can't change it now.)
- What if the elephant *had trodden* on the mouse? (She didn't, but we can imagine the result!)



- Supposing I *had given* that man my money! (I didn't, so I've still got my money now.)

### The verb *to wish*

The verb *to wish* is followed by an 'unreal' past tense when we want to talk about situations in the present that we are not happy about but cannot change:

- I wish I *had* more money (=but I haven't)
- She wishes she *was* beautiful (= but she's not)
- We wish we *could* come to your party (but we can't)

When we want to talk about situations in the past that we are not happy about or actions that we regret, we use the verb *to wish* followed by the past perfect:

- I wish I *hadn't said* that (= but I did)
- He wishes he *hadn't bought* the car (= but he did buy it.)
- I wish I *had taken* that job in New York (= but I didn't, so I'm stuck in Bristol)

**NOTE:** When we want to talk about situations we are not happy about and where we want **someone else** to change them, we use *to wish*

followed by **would + infinitive**:

- I wish he **would stop** smoking. (= I don't like it, I want **him** to change it)
- I wish you **would go** away. (= I don't want you here, I want **you** to take some action)
- I wish you **wouldn't squeeze** the toothpaste from the middle! (= I want you to change your habits.)

**I'd rather** and **it's time...**

These two expressions are also followed by an unreal past. The verb is in the past tense, but the situation is in the present.

When we want to talk about a course of action we would prefer someone else to take, we use **I'd rather + past tense**:

- I'd rather you **went**
- He'd rather you **called** the police
- I'd rather you **didn't** hunt elephants.

NOTE: the stress can be important in these sentences, to show what our preference is:

- **I'd rather you went** = not me,



- *I'd rather you **went*** = don't stay
- *He'd rather **you called the police*** = he doesn't want to
- *He'd rather you called the **police*** = not the ambulance service

Similarly, when we want to say that **now** is a suitable moment to do something, either for ourselves or for someone else, we use ***it's time + past tense***.

- It's (high) time I ***went***.
- It's time you ***paid*** that bill.
- Don't you think it's time you ***had*** a haircut?

## Exercises

Fill in the sentences with the ZERO CONDITIONAL

*Example:*

If you (press) **press** the green button, the lights (turn) **turn on**.

1. If you \_\_\_\_\_ (to mix) red and green, you \_\_\_\_\_ (to get) brown.
2. If you \_\_\_\_\_ (to drop) a glass on the floor (to drop), it \_\_\_\_\_ (to break).
3. If babies \_\_\_\_\_ (to be) hungry, they \_\_\_\_\_ (to cry).
4. When you \_\_\_\_\_ (to add) sugar, the sauce \_\_\_\_\_ (to taste) sweet.
5. Water \_\_\_\_\_ (to boil) if you \_\_\_\_\_ (to heat) it to 100 °C.
6. Plants \_\_\_\_\_ (to die) if they \_\_\_\_\_ (not/to get) enough water.
7. If you \_\_\_\_\_ (to put) water in the freezer, it \_\_\_\_\_ (to become) ice.
8. When the sun \_\_\_\_\_ (to rise), the street lights \_\_\_\_\_ (to go) out).





9. When you \_\_\_\_\_ (to heat) ice, it \_\_\_\_\_ (to melt).
10. He always \_\_\_\_\_ (to take) his umbrella when it \_\_\_\_\_ (to rain).

### Fill in the sentences with the FIRST TYPE CONDITIONAL

#### Example

If you (send) **send** this letter now, she (receive) **will receive** it tomorrow.

1. If I (do) \_\_\_\_\_ this test, I (improve) \_\_\_\_\_ my English.
2. If I (find) \_\_\_\_\_ your ring, I (give) \_\_\_\_\_ it back to you.
3. Peggy (go) \_\_\_\_\_ shopping if she (have) \_\_\_\_\_ time in the afternoon.
4. Simon (go) \_\_\_\_\_ to London next week if he (get) \_\_\_\_\_ a cheap flight.
5. If her boyfriend (phone / not) \_\_\_\_\_ today, she (leave) \_\_\_\_\_ him.
6. If they (study / not) \_\_\_\_\_ harder, they (pass / not) \_\_\_\_\_ the exam.
7. If it (rain) \_\_\_\_\_ tomorrow, I (have to / not) \_\_\_\_\_ water the plants.



8. You (be able / not) \_\_\_\_\_ to sleep if you (watch) \_\_\_\_\_ this scary film.
9. Susan (can / move / not) \_\_\_\_\_ into the new house if it (be / not) \_\_\_\_\_ ready on time.

### Fill in the sentences with the TYPE II CONDITIONAL

#### Example

If we (have) **had** a yacht, we (sail) **would sail** the seven seas.

1. If he (have) \_\_\_\_\_ more time, he (learn) \_\_\_\_\_ karate.
2. If they (tell) \_\_\_\_\_ their father, he (be) \_\_\_\_\_ very angry.
3. She (spend) \_\_\_\_\_ a year in the USA if it (be) \_\_\_\_\_ easier to get a green card.
4. If I (live) \_\_\_\_\_ on a lonely island, I (run) \_\_\_\_\_ around naked all day.
5. We (help) \_\_\_\_\_ you if we (know) \_\_\_\_\_ how.
6. My brother (buy) \_\_\_\_\_ a sports car if he (have) \_\_\_\_\_ the money.
7. If I (feel) \_\_\_\_\_ better, I (go) \_\_\_\_\_ to the cinema with you.
8. If you (go) \_\_\_\_\_ by bike more often, you (be / not) \_\_\_\_\_ so flabby.



9. She (not / talk) \_\_\_\_\_ to you if she (be) \_\_\_\_\_ mad at you.

### Fill in the sentences with the TYPE III CONDITIONAL

#### Example

If I (to go) **had gone** to the cinema, I (to watch) **would have watched** an interesting film.

1. If the weather \_\_\_\_\_ (to be) nice, they \_\_\_\_\_ (to play) football.

2. If we \_\_\_\_\_ (to go) to a good restaurant, we \_\_\_\_\_ (to have) a better dinner.

3. If John \_\_\_\_\_ (to learn) more words, he \_\_\_\_\_ (to write) a good report.

4. If the boys \_\_\_\_\_ (to take) the bus to school, they \_\_\_\_\_ (to arrive) on time.

5. If the teacher \_\_\_\_\_ (to explain) the homework, I \_\_\_\_\_ (to do) it.

6. If they \_\_\_\_\_ (to wait) for another 10 minutes, they \_\_\_\_\_ (to see) the pop star.



7. If the police \_\_\_\_\_ (to come) earlier, they \_\_\_\_\_ (to arrest) the burglar.
8. If you \_\_\_\_\_ (to buy) fresh green vegetable, your salad \_\_\_\_\_ (to taste) better.
9. If Alex \_\_\_\_\_ (to ask) me, I \_\_\_\_\_ (to email) the documents.
10. If he \_\_\_\_\_ (to speak) more slowly, Peggy \_\_\_\_\_ (to understand) him.

### Fill in the sentences with the UNREAL PAST

1. I wouldn't go there if (be) you.
2. It's high time you \_\_\_\_\_ (mend) your boat.
3. She behaved as though she \_\_\_\_\_ (be) the Prime Minister of Greece.
4. He talks to us as if we \_\_\_\_\_ (be) stupid.
5. If only I \_\_\_\_\_ (find) the answer now.
6. If only I \_\_\_\_\_ (talk) to the boss yesterday.
7. If we \_\_\_\_\_ (arrive) on time we would see Tom Cruise.
8. I'd rather you \_\_\_\_\_ (not love) that terrible boy!
9. I didn't understand a word. If only he \_\_\_\_\_ (speak) more clearly!
10. Playing in the snow is fun. I wish it \_\_\_\_\_ (snow) here more often.

Choose the most suitable word or phrase in each sentence.

- 1) I wish I **would** | **could** see my girlfriend during my stay in Rome.
- 2) She wishes she **had** | **had had** a holiday now.
- 3) If only George **hadn't sold** | **didn't sell** all these old CD's last year.
- 4) I wish it **had stopped** | **would stop** raining tomorrow.
- 5) If only I **learnt** | **had learnt** English when I was younger.
- 6) I wish she **wasn't leaving** | **didn't leave** right now.
- 7) If only I **was told** | **had been told** about the meeting yesterday.
- 8) I wish you **could** | **would** be quiet.
- 9) She wishes she **was** | **would be** more beautiful.
- 10) I wish I **was swimming** | **swam** in the sea now.
- 11) I wish Graham **could see** | **had seen** the children now.
- 12) I wish I **was** | **would be** famous now.

Fill in the sentences with the **THIRD CONDITIONAL**.

1. If they \_\_\_\_\_ (have) the time, they would have attended the meeting.
2. Jason \_\_\_\_\_ (recognize) the winner if he had been able to see them.
3. If I \_\_\_\_\_ (know) his name, I would have said hello.
4. If the president had been informed in time of the changes, he \_\_\_\_\_ (make) a different decision.
5. If Mary \_\_\_\_\_ (try) again, she would have been successful.



6. The children wouldn't have been so upset if they \_\_\_\_\_ (give, use passive voice) the candy.
7. If Jerry \_\_\_\_\_ (spend) more money on the repair work, the car would have driven better.
8. We \_\_\_\_\_ (believe) them if they had told us the whole story.
9. She would have finished the report on time if she \_\_\_\_\_ (know) all the facts beforehand.
10. We would not \_\_\_\_\_ (go) on vacation if we hadn't found that rental house for a great price
11. She \_\_\_\_\_ (wish) she had known about the problems.
12. If they \_\_\_\_\_ (ask) the right questions, they \_\_\_\_\_ (receive) the right answers.
13. She wouldn't have been allowed to speak if she \_\_\_\_\_ (disagree) with his point of view.
14. I know they \_\_\_\_\_ (wish) they had thought twice before doing that.
15. We wish we \_\_\_\_\_ (know) about those people.
16. Alice wouldn't \_\_\_\_\_ (speak) to him if she had known what he was going to say.
17. They wouldn't have taken her hard work for granted if she \_\_\_\_\_ (ask) them to help her prepare dinner.
18. She wishes she \_\_\_\_\_ (apply) for the bank position when it was still open.
19. If I \_\_\_\_\_ (invest) in Apple years ago, I would have become a millionaire!
20. Oliver would \_\_\_\_\_ (know) the answer if you had asked him.