

English Conditionals

There are several structures in English that are called **conditionals**.

"Condition" means "situation or circumstance". If a particular condition is true, **then** a particular result happens.

People sometimes call conditionals "IF" structures or sentences, because there is usually (but not always) the word "if" in a conditional sentence

First Conditional: real possibility

We are talking about the future. We are thinking about a particular condition or situation in the future, and the result of this condition. There is a real possibility that this condition will happen.

IF	condition	result
	present simple	WILL + base verb
If	it rains	I will stay at home.

Notice that we are thinking about a future condition. It is not raining yet. But the sky is cloudy and you think that it could rain. We use the present simple tense to talk about the possible future condition. We use WILL + base verb to talk about the possible future result.

Sometimes, we use **shall**, **can**, or **may** instead of **will**, for example: If you are good today, you can watch TV tonight.

Second Conditional: unreal possibility or dream

The **second conditional** is like the first conditional but there is **not** a real possibility that this condition will happen. For example, you do **not** have a lottery ticket. Is it possible to win? No! No lottery ticket, no win! But maybe you will buy a lottery ticket in the future. So you can think about winning in the future, like a dream. It's not very real, but it's still possible.

IF	condition	result
	past simple	WOULD + base verb
If	I won the lottery	I would buy a car.

We use the past simple tense to talk about the future condition. We use WOULD + base verb to talk about the future result. The important thing about the second conditional is that **there is an unreal possibility that the condition will happen**.

Here are some more examples:

IF	condition	result
	past simple	WOULD + base verb
If	I married Mary	I would be happy.

Sometimes, we use **should**, **could** or **might** instead of **would**, for example: If I won a million dollars, I **could** stop working

Third Conditional: no possibility

The **third conditional** refers to the **past**. We talk about a condition in the past that did **not** happen. That is why there is no possibility for this condition. The third conditional is also like a dream, but with **no possibility** of the dream coming true.

Last week you bought a lottery ticket. But you did not win.

	condition	result
	Past Perfect	WOULD HAVE + Past Participle
If	I had won the lottery	I would have bought a car.

Notice that we are thinking about an impossible past condition. You did not win the lottery. So the condition was not true, and that particular condition can never be true because it is finished. We use the past perfect tense to talk about the impossible past condition. We use **WOULD HAVE + past participle** to talk about the impossible past result. The important thing about the third conditional is that both the condition and result are **impossible** now.

Sometimes, we use **should have**, **could have**, **might have** instead of **would have**, for example: If you had bought a lottery ticket, you **might have** won.

Look at some more examples in the tables below:

IF	condition	result
	past perfect	WOULD HAVE + past participle
If	I had seen Mary	I would have told her.

Zero Conditional: certainty

We use the so-called **zero conditional** when the result of the condition is always true, like a scientific fact.

Take some ice. Put it in a saucepan. Heat the saucepan. What happens? The ice melts (it becomes water). You would be surprised if it did not.

IF	condition	result
	present simple	present simple
If	you heat ice	it melts.

Notice that we are thinking about a result that is always true for this condition. The result of the condition is an absolute **certainty**. We are not thinking about the future or the past, or even the present. We are thinking about a simple fact. We use the present simple tense to talk about the condition. We also use the present simple tense to talk about the result. The important thing about the zero conditional is that **the condition always has the same result**.

We can also use **when** instead of **if**, for example:
When I get up late I miss my bus.

Look at some more examples in the tables below:

IF	condition	result
	present simple	present simple
If	I miss the 8 o'clock bus	I am late for work.

Cal é a diferenza entre :if, unless, in case, provided that, as long as, so that ?

Unless means the same as **if ... not**. It always refers to the conditional part of the sentence and not the result part of the sentence:

If he doesn't **get** here soon, we will have to start the meeting without him.

Unless he gets here soon, we will have to start the meeting without him.

Se non chega axiña, empezarámola reunión sen él

We often use **not + unless**, which means **only ... if**, when we want to emphasize a condition:

They **will only sign** the contract **if** we give them an additional discount.

They **won't sign** the contract **unless** we give them an additional discount.

Non asinarán o contrato a non ser que lles demos un desconto adicional

We use **in case** to talk about precautions we will take before a problem happens. We use **if** to talk about what we will do after a problem happens:

We are going to insure the shipment **in case** the goods get damaged in transit.
(We will take our insurance first; the problem may or may not happen afterward.)

Imos aseguralo cargamento por se acaso se estropean os produtos no tránsito

If the goods get damaged in transit, we'll make a claim.
(The damage may happen, and we will make a claim afterward.)

. **Provided that** vs **as long as**,

We can use **provided that/providing**, **as long as**, and **so long as** when we want to emphasize condition. **Provided that** and **as long as** mean **if** and **only if** (**providing** and **so long as** are a little less formal):

I will agree to these conditions **provided that** they increase my salary.

Aceptarei estas condicións sempre e cando incrementen o salario
(I will only agree if they give me more money.)

The strike will be successful **as long as** we all stay together.
(It will only succeed if we all stay together.)

A folga triunfará sempre e cando estemos unidos

Sabes cando se usan estes conectores e o seu significado?

Therefore / Consequently / As a result / Thus / For this reason

Todos teñen o mesmo significado e indican consecuencia: polo tanto, por ese motivo, en consecuencia...

Observa o exemplo seguinte:

- I have long been interested in science and animals. Therefore, I have decided to study Biology in college.

Hai tempo que me entusiasman as ciencias e os animais e por iso decidín estudar bioloxía na universidade

Intenta traducir estes exemplos

- The athlete was caught using drugs. **Consequently**, he was kicked off the team.
- Someone called in a bomb threat. **As a result**, school was cancelled.
- The government did not prepare for the hurricane. **Thus**, many people suffered.
- Rent is too expensive in Boston. **For this reason**, I have decided to move to Ohio.