

GRAMMAR

6.1 real conditionals

When we talk about situations which are always true, or events which are possible or probable in the future, using *if/when*, we can call these 'real conditionals'. They are also often referred to as zero (0) conditionals (always true) and first (1) conditionals (possible or probable in the future).

real conditional (zero)

if/when +	present simple +	present simple
If/When	You* heat water to 100° Centigrade,	it boils.

* Here you is a general subject meaning 'anyone' or 'people in general'.

Use the real conditional (zero) to talk about a general situation, or something which is always true (a fact):

If plants don't have water, they die. Ice melts if you heat it.

(You here refers to 'anyone', or people generally, not 'you' specifically.)

If/When can come at the beginning or in the middle of the sentence:

If I'm not in the office by 8 a.m., my boss gets angry.

My boss gets angry if I'm not in the office by 8 a.m.

If and *when* have the same meaning in zero conditional sentences.

In this case *if* means 'when this happens' or 'every time this happens':

When I'm feeling stressed, I eat chocolate.

If I'm feeling stressed, I eat chocolate.

real conditional (first)

if/when +	present simple +	will/could/might + verb
If	you give me your phone number,	I'll call you when we're ready.
When	you go into the kitchen,	you'll see the keys on the table.

Use the real conditional (first) to talk about possible situations in the future and their consequences. If you are sure about the result, use *will/won't*. If you're not sure, use *could/might*.

We can change the order of the sentence, but *when* is always followed by the present simple.

If my train arrives on time, I'll meet you at ten o'clock. OR *I'll meet you at ten o'clock if my train arrives on time.* NOT *if my train will arrive on time.*

In first conditional sentences, *if* and *when* have different meanings. Use *if* when you are not sure if the situation will happen:

If I pass my exams, I'll be very happy.

Use *when* for a situation which you know will happen: *When I pass my exams, I'll have a party.*

Unless has the meaning of 'if not' or 'except in this situation':

I'll go straight to the restaurant, unless you call me first. (I will go straight to the restaurant if you don't call me first.)

Note the difference between zero and first conditional in the sentences below:

If you sit in the sun, you get sunburn.

(Zero conditional for a general situation/fact. 'You' means anyone, or people in general.)

If you sit in the sun, you'll get sunburn.

(First conditional for a specific situation. I'm talking to you (personally) about what will happen today.)

6.2 hypothetical conditional: present/future

if +	past simple +	would clause
If	I worked longer hours, he was the President, we bought the house,	I would make more money. he'd make a lot of changes. we'd need to sell our car.

Use the hypothetical conditional to talk about an unreal or imaginary situation and its consequences. In conditional sentences, the past tense is used to indicate that something is hypothetical or imaginary.

In spoken English, *would* is contracted in the positive and negative form:

I'd be there if I had time. If she had enough food, she'd feed us all.

Would is not usually contracted in the question form:

If you passed your exam, would you go to university?

Would you help me if I paid you?

Use *If I were you ...* to give advice:

If I were you, I'd change teams.

Instead of *would*, we can use *could* or *should*:

If you got really fit, you could probably play again.

It is common to use other expressions in the *would* clause: *would be able to*, *would need to* and *would have to*

If I lost my job, I'd need to find another one!

We would have to cancel the game if it rained.

If you bought a larger quantity, we'd be able to offer you a better deal.

6.3 giving news

good news	I've got some good news (for you). I'm really pleased to tell you ... You'll never guess what.
bad news	Bad news, I'm afraid. I'm sorry to have to tell you, but ... I'm afraid/Unfortunately, ... I'm afraid I've got some bad news ... There's something I've got to tell you.
good or bad news	You know ...? Well, ... I've/We've got something to tell you.
responding to good news	Wow! That's fantastic/great news. Congratulations! You're joking! You lucky thing! Well done. Have you?/Did you?
responding to bad news	That's a shame. That's terrible/awful. That's really annoying. I'm really sorry to hear that.

PRACTICE

6.1

A Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

- If I _____ (pass) my exams, my teacher _____ (be) very surprised.
- When we _____ (visit) my mother, she usually _____ (look after) the children.
- When Gaby _____ (leave) her job in the summer, she _____ (worry) about what to do next.
- If I _____ (not find) any cheap tickets, we _____ (not go) to Malta.
- If you _____ (not water) plants, they _____ (die).
- I _____ (be) surprised if Martha _____ (come) to the party. She said she wasn't feeling well.
- If you _____ (get) lost, do you usually _____ (ask) someone for directions?
- They _____ (not come) unless you _____ (invite) them.

B Underline the correct alternative.

- You can't come to the conference unless/if/when you're invited.
- I'm not talking to you unless/if/when you calm down first.
- They'll arrive as soon as dinner is/will be/won't be ready.
- They'll cancel the flight if/unless/when the weather is bad.
- If you eat all of that chocolate mousse, you 'll feel/feel/won't feel ill.
- We'll organise a taxi when we know/will know/might know what time the concert starts.
- When I see a spider, I always scream/might scream/will scream.
- I'll get some money as soon as the bank will open/opens/might open.

6.2

A Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Use contractions where possible.

- If I _____ (sell) my house now, it _____ (not/be) worth very much.
- _____ (your parents/come) if I _____ (organise) a party?
- He _____ (not/be) able to study here if _____ (not/pass) that exam.
- If you _____ (lose) your passport, _____ (need) visit the consulate.
- They _____ (be) healthier if _____ (not/eat) so much junk food.
- If you _____ (write) a novel, what _____ (call) it?
- If the students _____ (not/have) internet access, _____ (find) it difficult.
- We _____ (not/work) there if the boss _____ (not/give) us a lot of freedom.
- Where _____ (she/live) if _____ (have) to move to a different country?
- If he _____ (can) study on Tuesdays, _____ (not/need) to come on Wednesday.

B Write answers to the questions using the prompts. Use contractions.

- A: Can we walk to the game?
B: No. (be/late)
If we walked to the game, we'd be late.
- A: Why doesn't the team enter the competition?
B: (it/lose)
If the team _____.
- A: Can I borrow his car?
B: No. (get/angry)
If you _____.
- A: Why don't we call her now?
B: No. (we/wake her up)
If we _____.
- A: Why can't we start the project again?
B: (waste/money)
If we _____.
- A: Can we extend our holiday?
B: No. (miss/school)
If we _____.

6.3

A Complete the conversations.

- A: You'll never guess what.
B: What?
A: I'm moving to Australia.
B: You're joking!
A: No, I'm leaving in March.
B: You lose thing.
- A: I've passed my exams!
B: How you? Congratulations!
A: Yes, I got the results this morning.

- A: There's something I've got to tell you.
B: What is it?
A: I've decided to leave my job at the university.
B: I'm sorry to hear that. What's the problem?
- A: I'm arriving we're going to be late.
B: Why? What's happened?
A: The flight's been delayed.
B: Oh, that's a sad. That's really a disappointment.