Conditionals (if...)

1. Zero Conditional: certainty/fact

We use the so-called Zero Conditional when the result of the condition is always true, like a scientific fact. Example: 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. The important thing about the zero conditional is that the conditionalways has the same result.

2. First Conditional: A real possibility in the present/future

A First Conditional sentence is one connecting two possible future actions, where one must take place before the second is possible.

If	Condition	Result
If	present simple	will + base verb
	She gets good marks,	she will go to university.

We are talking about the future, but we use the present tense for the condition and the 'will' future tensefor the result. In this case, the person is sure about going to university.

- If you don't want it, I'll have it.
- If they are late, we'll start without them.
- If he drives too fast, he'll have an accident.
- If we don't set off soon, we'll arrive after the film starts.

We also use the first conditional to give someone advice, to make a suggestion or a request or to give someone an order.

- If you don't tidy your room, I'll take away your Gameboy.
- If you don't mind, I'll close the window as I'm rather cold.

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3. Second Conditional: Imaginary Present or Unlikely Future

The Second Conditional can be used to talk about imaginary present situations, where we are imagining something different from what is really the case. We can also use it to talk about things in the future that are unlikely to happen, as the condition is unlikely to be met. We use the past tense in the condition part and would for the result.

If	Condition	Result	Possibility
	past simple	would + base verb	Imaginary / unlikely present or future actions
If	I had the time,	I would learn Italian.	I don't have the time, so I'm not going to learn Italian.
	I won the lottery,	I would travel around the world.	There's a very small chance of winning the lottery, so the trip is unlikely

- If I were younger, I would go and live in a different country.
- If we had more money, we would buy a new house.
- If she passed her exams, she would go to university.
- If they saved more money, they would be able to buy a new car.

4. Third Conditional: Imaginary Past

The Third Conditional is used when we are talking about the past and imagining something different from what actually happened:

	Condition	Result	What actually happened
If	Past Perfect	would have + Past Participle	I didn't know and didn't help.
	I had known,	I would have helped.	

- If I hadn't gone to bed so late, I would have woken up in time for my flight.
- If she hadn't eaten all that chocolate, she would have had very good skin.
- If they had saved more money, they would have had enough to buy a new car.
- If we hadn't missed the plane, we would have been on holiday now.

Practice

Choose the correct answer from a, b, c , or d:

1. If people were a little more tolerant, our world _____ a better place.

a- would have been

b- would be

c- will be

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2. If my father had locked his car properly, his car _____stolen.

a- will not be

b- would not be

c. would never have been

3. If the ozone layer disappears a little more, we _____ a much higher risk of attracting skin cancer.

a- would run

b- will run

c. would have run

4. I would never feel comfortable on a plane if I_____ it's the pilot's first time to fly a plane.

a. know

b- knew

c- would know

5. A dog will never bite you if you _____ at it straight in the eyes.

a- will look

b- would look

c- look

6.The first thing I will do is drive to Spain if I _____ my driving license.

a- would get

b- got

c- get

7. If John hadn't responded in such an aggressive manner, he _____ a black eye.

a- would never have had.

b- won't have

c- will never have had

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8. If they _____ more money, they would have had enough to buy a new car.

a. save

b. saved

c. had saved

9. If I _____ stronger, I'd help you carry the piano.

a- am

b- were

c- had been

10. If we'd seen you, we _____

a- will stop

b- stopped

c- would have stopped

11. If we _____ him tomorrow, we'll say hello.

a- meet

b- will meet

c- met

12. He would have repaired the car himself if he _____ the tools.

a- has

b- had

c- had had

13. If you drop the vase, it _____

a- breaks

b- will break

c- broke

14. If I hadn't studied, I _____ the exam.

a- will pass

b- had not pass

c- wouldn't have passed

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15. I wouldn't go to school by bus if I _____ a driving license.

a- have

b- will have

c. had

16. Unless I get a cheap flight, I _____ to London.

a- won't travel

b- didn't travel

c- wouldn't travel

17. We'd be stupid if we _____ him about our secret.

a- tell

b- told

c- had told

18. If there is an emergency, _____the head office to get help.

a. call

b. called

c. will call

19. You _____ lots of health problems if you keep eating too much junk food.

a. get

b. will get

c. got

20. _____ about the competition, I would have participated in it without any hesitation.

a. If I know

b. If I knew

c. If I had known

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