

70 First conditional



1 Form

CONDITION (if ...) present tense	RESULT <i>will</i> / <i>won't</i> + infinitive without to
<i>If you give me some money,</i>	<i>I'll (I will) get some ice creams.</i>
<i>If you call me before six o'clock,</i>	<i>I won't (I will not) be at home.</i>
<i>If you don't work hard,</i>	<i>you'll (you will) fail your exams.</i>

The first conditional describes a future situation.



But we use the present tense after *if*, not *will* or *won't*.

~~*X If you will call me before six o'clock,*~~ *I won't be at home.*
✓ If you call me before six o'clock,

2 Possible and certain future situations

We use the first conditional to talk about a POSSIBLE future action or situation:

If you give me some money, I'll get some ice creams. (You might give me some money.)
If the tickets are too expensive, we won't buy them. (The tickets might be too expensive.)
Sue's parents will give her a car if she passes the exam. (Sue might pass the exam.)

We can use *when* if a future action or situation is CERTAIN:

When I arrive at the airport, I'll phone you. (I will arrive at the airport.)
Jane will start work as a nurse when she finishes the course. (She will finish the course.)
Future situations with *when*, *until*, *as soon as*, etc. ➤ Unit 94.2

3 Offers and warnings

We can also use the first conditional

- to offer or suggest something:
If you get the shopping, I'll wash the car.
I'll pay for dinner if you pay for lunch.
- to warn someone not to do something:
If you arrive late, we'll go without you. (Don't arrive late.)
If you make any more noise, I'll call the police. (Don't make any more noise.)

Practice

1 Use the words below to write sentences with *if* or *when*.

possible future action	result
0 Dilip / pass the exam	he / go to university <i>If Dilip passes the exam, he'll go to university.</i>
1 you / get there early	you / get the best seats
2 I / need your help	I / phone you
3 the bus / not come	we / take you in our car
4 it / rain tomorrow	we / not go to the park

certain future action	result
00 Mary / get to Paris	she / send us an email <i>When Mary gets to Paris, she'll send us an email.</i>
5 Jo and Mike / arrive	I / offer them a drink
6 the train / stop	the doors / open
7 we / go into town	we / have lunch there
8 course / finish	I / go back to Japan

2 Choose the best answer, A or B.

0 I'll get some milk when I go to the shops.
A I'll go to the shops soon. B I might go to the shops.

1 If I find the book you want, I'll send you a text message.
A I'll definitely find the book. B I might find the book.

2 When your cousins arrive, we'll start cooking supper.
A This is going to happen in the future. B This happens regularly.

3 When Neela finishes the course, she'll be a doctor.
A I'm not sure if Neela will finish the course. B I'm certain Neela will finish the course.

4 I'll tell her the news if she comes to the party.
A She's definitely coming to the party. B She might come to the party.

3 GRAMMAR IN USE Complete the email with forms of the verbs in brackets (). Use short forms if possible.

Subject: Holiday!

Hi Carla

We're at the airport, but our plane isn't here yet. I'm a bit worried because if (0) it *isn't* (not be) on time, (1) we (miss) our bus to Faro. Then (2) we (not get) to the hotel tonight! Anyway, when the plane (3) (arrive), (4) I (send) you a text message. We're really excited about the holiday. Franco wants to go surfing but he says (5) he (not do) it if (6) I (not go) with him! But you know I'm no good at water sports. Anyway, it will be great to try all the local food. If the hotel restaurant (7) (be) nice, (8) we (eat) there. One more thing, I forgot to ask you about watering the garden. If (9) you (water) the plants while we're away, (10) I (feed) your cat when you go on holiday in May. Does that sound OK?

Bella