Conditionals

Sophie is in Iceland for work and Oliver is in a really bad mood.

Instructions

As you watch the video, look at the examples of conditional sentences. They are in red in the subtitles. Then read the conversation below to learn more. Finally, do the grammar exercises to check you understand, and can use, conditionals correctly.

Watch the video:

We use conditional sentences to say one thing depends on another. They can be used to talk about real or imaginary situations. One of the clauses starts with *if* (or a similar word) – this is the conditional clause. The other clause talks about the result of the conditional clause happening.

Ummm?

Don't worry, it's a lot easier than it sounds. Let's look at some examples.

If you don't tell *me,* ***I'll*** *just* ***keep*** *asking.*

If I promise *to travel less,* ***will you forgive*** *me?*

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I know that one. It's a first conditional: *if* + present simple, then *will* + infinitive.

That's right. It's for talking about a situation in the future which the speaker thinks is quite possible. If the first condition happens, something will happen as a result. In this conditional sentence, the present tense after *if* refers to the future, not the present.

And can you change the order of the clauses round?

Yes, and we leave out the comma in the middle of the sentence if the order is changed round.

***I'll** just **keep** asking **if you don't tell** me.*

OK. I also know the second conditional. *If* + past simple, then *would* + infinitive.

Right again! This is for talking about an unlikely or unreal condition.

***If you travelled** less because of me, **I'd feel** worse.*
***If I had** the opportunity to visit places like that, **I wouldn't complain**!*

So, in the second example, Oliver doesn't think he will have the opportunity to travel a lot. It's possible but improbable. We use the past simple to show that it's not likely, not to indicate past time.

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Can you use any other verbs, apart from *would*, in this kind of conditional?

Yes, we sometimes use other modal verbs like *might* or *could* in the result clause (not the *if* clause).

I see. What about, 'If you mix blue and yellow, you get green'. Is that a conditional?

Yes. That's a zero conditional. We often use them for facts, or in academic subjects.

> ***When it rains** a lot, **the animals move** to higher ground. (geography)*

What about other words that can replace *if*, like *unless* and *as long as*?

Well, *unless* is a kind of negative version of *if*.

> *I'll never go **unless** you take me. (= If you don't take me, I'll never go.)*

As long as imposes a condition on someone. You're telling them what you expect them to do.

> *You can borrow my surfboard **as long as** you get it back to me by five o'clock.*

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So if you agree to what I say, you can borrow my surfboard?

Exactly.

Are there any other conditionals?

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Well, there's the third conditional, but we'll deal with that separately.

Phew! Now, *if you don't mind, I'll have* to stop there.

That's fine, *as long as* everything's clear!

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Check your grammar



Watch the video on our website and read the conversation between Sophie and Anna. Then do these exercises to check your understanding of conditionals.



1. Check your grammar: matching

Match the two sentence halves and write a–h next to the numbers 1–8.

1……	If they don't stop that noise,	a.	if I ate that.
2……	If I had enough money for a holiday,	b.	unless I have to babysit.
3……	If you can't repair your headphones,	c.	I'll go next door and complain.
4……	I'd be ill	d.	you might need to buy new ones.
5……	If we had more space at home,	e.	if you fancy a chat.
6……	Ice cream melts	f.	I'd go to Iceland.
7……	I'll see you on Saturday night	g.	we could have a dog.
8……	Call me	h.	if you don't keep it in the freezer.

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2. Check your grammar: multiple choice

Circle the correct verb form to complete the conditional sentences.

1. If the bus is late, I 'll be / 'd be / was late for school.
2. I'll phone Charlie from home later if I remembered / remember / 'll remember .
3. If I go to the shops this afternoon, I buy / 'll buy / would buy some chocolate for you.
4. If I have / would / had enough money, you know I'd lend it to you.
5. I can / could / 'll borrow my parents' car if I had my driving licence.
6. I wouldn't / won't / not tell anyone if you tell me.
7. If there's any cake left, I had / would have / 'll have another piece.
8. If you had three wishes, what did / would / will you wish for?

3. Check your grammar: gap fill

Write one word to complete each conditional sentence.

1. If I _____ enough money, I'd buy a car.
2. If I _____ to Dan's party, I'll call you.
3. I _____ sleep better if I didn't have to share a room.
4. _____ you call me when you get there?
5. If I _____ have too much homework to do this weekend, I'll come out with you.
6. I'd _____ really bored without my phone!
7. If you _____ regular exercise, you'll feel a lot better.
8. You don't need to call me unless you _____ a problem.

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Writing:

If you could go anywhere in the world on your next holiday, where would you go and why?

Write 3 paragraphs. Remember to use linking words and order your ideas.

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