

The Conditionals

THE 'ZERO' CONDITIONAL

1. Form

In 'zero' conditional sentences, the tense in **both parts** of the sentence is the **simple present**:

'IF' CLAUSE (CONDITION)

If + simple present

If you heat ice
If it rains

MAIN CLAUSE (RESULT)

simple present

it melts.
you get wet

NOTE: The order of the clauses is not fixed - the 'if' clause can be first or second:

- *Ice melts if you heat it.*
- *You get wet if it rains.*

2. Function

In these sentences, the time is **now or always** and the situation is **real and possible**. They are used to make statements about the real world, and often refer to general truths, such as scientific facts.

Examples:

- If you **freeze** water, it **becomes** a solid.
- Plants **die** if they **don't get** enough water.
- If my husband **has** a cold, I usually **catch** it.
- If public transport **is** efficient, people **stop** using their cars.
- If you **mix** red and blue, you **get** purple.

This structure is often used to give instructions, using the imperative in the main clause:

- If Bill **phones**, **tell** him to meet me at the cinema.
- **Ask** Pete if **you're** not sure what to do.

TYPE 1 CONDITIONAL

1. Form

In a *Type 1* conditional sentence, the tense in the 'if' clause is the **simple present**, and the tense in the main clause is the **simple future**

'IF' CLAUSE (CONDITION)

If + simple present

If it rains
If you don't hurry

MAIN CLAUSE (RESULT)

Simple future

you will get wet
we will miss the train.

2. Function

In these sentences, the time is the **present or future** and the situation is **real**. They refer to a **possible condition** and its **probable result**. They are based on facts, and they are used to make statements about the real world, and about particular situations. We often use such sentences to give warnings:

- *If you don't leave, I'll call the police.*
- *If you don't drop the gun, I'll shoot!*

Examples:

- If you **drop** that glass, it **will break**.
- Nobody **will notice** if you **make** a mistake.
- If I **have** time, **I'll finish** that letter.
- What **will you do** if you **miss** the plane?

NOTE: We can use modals to express the degree of certainty of the result:

- *I **may finish** that letter if I **have** time.*

TYPE 2 CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

1. Form

In a *Type 2 conditional sentence*, the tense in the 'if' clause is the **simple past**, and the tense in the main clause is the **present conditional**:

'IF' CLAUSE	MAIN CLAUSE
If + simple past	Present conditional
If it rained	you would get wet
If you went to bed earlier	you wouldn't be so tired.

Present conditional, form

The present conditional of any verb is composed of two parts - the modal auxiliary *would* + the infinitive of the main verb (without 'to').

Subject	would	infinitive without to
She	would	learn

Affirmative

I	would	go
---	-------	----

Negative

I	wouldn't	ask
---	----------	-----

Interrogative

Would	she	come?
-------	-----	-------

Interrogative negative

Wouldn't	they	accept?
----------	------	---------

Would: Contractions of would

In spoken English, **would** is contracted to **'d**.

I'd We'd
 you'd you'd
 he'd, she'd they'd

The negative contraction = **wouldn't**.

Example: **to accept, Present conditional**

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative
I would accept	I wouldn't accept	Would I accept?
You would accept	You wouldn't accept	Would you accept?
He would accept	She wouldn't accept	Would he accept?

We would accept	We wouldn't accept	Would we accept?
You would accept	You wouldn't accept	Would you accept?
They would accept	They wouldn't accept	Would they accept?

2. Function

In these sentences, the time is **now or any time**, and the situation is **unreal**. They are **not** based on **fact**, and they refer to an **unlikely or hypothetical condition** and its **probable result**. The use of the past tense after 'if' indicates **unreality**. We can nearly always add a phrase starting with "but", that expresses the real situation:

- *If the weather **wasn't** so bad, we **would go** to the park (...but it is bad, so we can't go)*
- *If I **was** the Queen of England, I **would give** everyone £100. (...but I'm not, so I won't)*

Examples of use:

1. To make a statement about something that is not real at present, but is possible:

*I **would visit** her if I **had** time. (= I haven't got time but I might have some time)*

2. To make a statement about a situation that is not real now and never could be real:

*If I **were** you, I **d give up** smoking (but I could never be you)*

Examples:

- If I **was** a plant, I **would love** the rain.
- If you really **loved** me, you **would buy** me a diamond ring.
- If I **knew** where she lived, I **would go** and see her.
- You **wouldn't need** to read this if you **understood** English grammar.
- Would he go** to the concert if I **gave** him a ticket?
- They **wouldn't invite** her if they **didn't like** her
- We **would be able** to buy a larger house if we **had** more money

NOTE: It is correct, and very common, to say "If I **were**" instead of "If I **was**".

TYPE 3 CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

1. Form

In a Type 3 conditional sentence, the tense in the 'if' clause is the **past perfect**, and the tense in the main clause is the **perfect conditional**:

'IF' CLAUSE

If + past perfect

If it had rained
If you had worked harder

MAIN CLAUSE

Perfect conditional

you would have got wet
you would have passed the exam.

Perfect conditional - form

The perfect conditional of any verb is composed of two elements: *would* + the perfect infinitive of the main verb (= *have* + *past participle*):

Subject	would	perfect infinitive
He	would	have gone...
They	would	have stayed...
Affirmative		
I	would	have believed ...
Negative		
She	wouldn't	have given...
Interrogative		
Would	you	have left...?
Interrogative negative		
Wouldn't	he	have been...?

Example: **to go**, Past conditional

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative
I would have gone	I wouldn't have gone	Would I have gone?
You would have gone	You wouldn't have gone	Would you have gone?
He would have gone	He wouldn't have gone	Would it have gone?
We would have gone	We wouldn't have gone	Would we have gone?
You would have gone	You wouldn't have gone	Would you have gone?
They would have gone	They wouldn't have gone	Would they have gone?

In these sentences, the time is **past**, and the situation is **contrary to reality**. The facts they are based on are the **opposite** of what is expressed.

Type 3 conditional sentences, are truly **hypothetical** or **unreal**, because it is now too late for the condition or its result to exist. There is always an unspoken "but..." phrase:

- If I **had worked** harder I **would have passed** the exam (but I didn't work hard, and I didn't pass the exam).
- If **I'd known** you were coming **I'd have baked** a cake (but I didn't know, and I haven't baked a cake).

NOTE: Both **would** and **had** can be contracted to **'d**, which can be confusing. Remember that you **NEVER** use **would** in the **IF**-clause, so in the example above, "If I'd known" must be "If I **had** known", and "I'd have baked" must be "I **would** have baked.."

Examples:

- If **I'd known** you were in hospital, I **would have visited** you.
- I **would have bought** you a present if **I'd known** it was your birthday.
- If **they'd had** a better goalkeeper they **wouldn't have lost** the game.
- If you **had told** me you were on the Internet, **I'd have sent** you an e-mail.
- Would you have bought** an elephant if **you'd known** how much they eat?

.....

Tests

The Zero Conditional Exercise at Auto-English

Use the conditions and results in the box to complete the phrases below.

Conditions	Results
you've got a headache	you get pink
you don't wear a crash helmet	A dog bites
you heat it to 100 °c	the dvd player comes on
she comes home very late	Butter melts
you leave gates open in the country	it scratches you
you add sugar	You have more chance of being killed

- 1 Water boils if _____ .
- 2 If you mix red and white _____ .
- 3 _____ if you leave it in the sun.
- 4 If _____ , take an aspirin.
- 5 If _____ , it tastes sweet.
- 6 _____ if you go near its food when it's eating.
- 7 If you pull a cat's tail, _____ .
- 8 _____ if you don't wear a seat belt.
- 9 You can end up brain damaged if _____ .
- 10 If you press this switch, _____ .
- 11 If _____ , her folks get very angry.
- 12 Farmers get very angry if _____ .

First Conditional Exercise at Auto-English

IF + PRESENT SIMPLE , WILL + INFINITIVE
WILL + INFINITIVE + IF + PRESENT SIMPLE

Fill the gap using the verb in brackets. **Three** gaps need a **NEGATIVE** verb and watch out for the **third person S!**

- 1 If Clare _____ late again, the hockey trainer will be furious. (to arrive)
- 2 You'll be sorry if you _____ for your exams. (to revise)
- 3 We _____ if the weather's good. (to go)
- 4 They _____ you if you wear a wig and dark glasses. (to recognise)
- 5 If the bus _____ on time, I won't miss the football. (to be)
- 6 If you _____ your homework now, you'll be free all tomorrow. (to do)
- 7 We _____ out if there's no food at home. (to eat)
- 8 You'll find life much easier if you _____ more often. (to smile)
- 9 If it's hot, we _____ for a swim. (to go)

- 10 You'll do it better if you _____ more time over it. (to take)
- 11 If she _____ practising, she'll get better. (to keep)
- 12 Mum will be very sad if Jim _____ Mother's Day again. (to forget)
- 13 I _____ so happy if I pass the exam. (to be)
- 14 You'll be really tired tomorrow if you _____ to bed soon. (to go)
- 15 The government _____ the next election if they continue to ignore public opinion. (to lose)
- 16 If Valencia FC win the Spanish football league, I _____ my hair blue. (to dye)
- 17 If someone _____ you a bike, you can come with us. (to lend)

Second Conditional Exercise at Auto-English

IF + PAST SIMPLE , WOULD + INFINITIVE
WOULD+ INFINITIVE + IF + PAST SIMPLE

Fill the gap using the verb in brackets. **5** gaps need a **NEGATIVE** verb!

- 1 I _____ that if I were you. It's bad luck. (to do)
- 2 They'd be a better team if they _____ fitter. (to be)
- 3 If I had some spare money, I _____ a DVD player. (to buy)
- 4 Those children _____ so horrible if their parents were stricter. (to be)
- 5 I wouldn't go out with him even if you _____ me. (to pay)
- 6 If we _____ so hard, we wouldn't be so tired all the time. (to work)
- 7 If she didn't take so long in the shower, she _____ more time for breakfast. (to have)
- 8 If you _____ so much beer, you wouldn't be so fat. (to drink)
- 9 The world _____ a better place if politicians were less vain. (to be)
- 10 I _____ to visit Thailand if I had the chance. (to love)
- 11 If I had more free time, I _____ a play. (to write)
- 12 If you _____ a digital camera, you could send photos by email.

(to have)

- 13 He would definitely lose weight if he _____ eating carbohydrates and sugar. (to stop)
- 14 We could go travelling across France if we _____ a tent. (to buy)
- 15 Valencia would have the perfect climate if it _____ so hot in July and August. (to be)
- 16 If I understood more about computers, I _____ help you out. (to be able to)
- 17 I wouldn't do that if I _____ you. (to be)

The Third Conditional Exercise at Auto-English

IF + PAST PERFECT , WOULD HAVE + PAST PARTICIPLE
WOULD HAVE + PAST PARTICIPLE + IF + PAST PERFECT

Fill the gap using the verb in brackets. Think very carefully about the meaning of the phrase before deciding whether to use a negative or positive verb form.

- 1 I wouldn't be angry if you _____ my chocolate mousse. (to eat)
- 2 If he had known you were in hospital, he _____ you. (to visit)
- 3 We wouldn't have come by taxi if we _____ the right bus. (to find)
- 4 We would have visited the Prado gallery if we _____ time. (to have)
- 5 If you hadn't been asking me questions all the time, I _____ the film.(to enjoy)
- 6 If I _____ your number, I would have phoned.(to know)
- 7 If just one person had remembered my birthday, I _____ sad. (to be)
- 8 I would have understood the film if it _____ in German. (to be*)
- 9 They _____ to see you if they hadn't been away. (to come)
- 10 If she _____ on a double yellow line, she wouldn't have got a fine. (to park)
- 11 If I'd known you were coming, I _____ a cake. (to bake)
- 12 If she _____ the shed unlocked, they wouldn't have stolen her bike. (to leave)
- 13 If you had told me about the concert, I _____. (to go)

- 14 The storm _____ a lot of damage if it had come this way. (to do)
- 15 The holidays would have been great if the weather _____ better. (to be)