

**Advanced & Post Reading Material (APRM)**  
**EPP- II, 2024-25 GLA U, Mathura**  
**Module-I(Verbal Skills)**  
**Conditionals**

Conditional sentences consist of a conditional clause and a main clause:

1-[conditional clause] **If** a lot of people come, [main clause] we'll have to get extra chairs.

2-[conditional clause] **Unless** you book weeks in advance, [main clause] you won't get a flight.

**The verb in the conditional clause reflects the speaker's point of view on whether the imagined situation is likely or impossible:**

1-If you **win** the next match, **will** you be in the semi-final? (present simple + *will* indicates the speaker thinks winning the match is possible or likely)

2-If I **won** a million pounds, I **would** give this job up tomorrow! (past simple + *would* indicates the speaker thinks winning a million pounds is not likely to happen)

3-If we **had won** the competition, we **would have had** a free trip to Moscow. (past perfect + *would have* refers to an impossible condition – the event did not happen)

**Order of clauses:**

Conditional clauses usually come before main clauses but they may also come after them:

1-If you see Dora, will you give her a message? (conditional clause first; a comma is normally used in writing)

2-I'll go to Bristol tomorrow **if the weather is good**. (conditional clause second; a comma is not normally used in writing)

**Verb forms in the conditional clause**

The verb in the conditional clause may be in the simple form or the continuous form, depending on the meaning:

1-If you **owe** money, you must pay it back immediately. (present simple)

2-If you're **feeling** hungry, we can go and get something to eat. (present continuous)

3-If he **had** time, he always called in to see us. (past simple)

4-If they **were working**, we always tried not to disturb them. (past continuous)

**Conditions: Imagined vs Real:**

**Imagined situations**

Conditional sentences consider imagined or uncertain situations and the possible results of these situations. The most common types of conditional sentences involve *if*:

[imagined situation] **If** I get the job in Milan, [result] I'll be pretty happy.

[outcome] We'll have the party in the garden [imagined situation] **as long as** it doesn't rain. (or ... *if it doesn't rain*. or ... *on condition that it doesn't rain*.)

**Imagined conditions:**

There are different types of conditions. Some are possible or likely, others are unlikely, and others are impossible:

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1-***If the weather improves, we'll go for a walk.*** (It is possible or likely that the weather will improve.)

2-***If the weather improved, we could go for a walk.*** (It is not likely that the weather will improve.)

3-***If the weather had improved, we could have gone for a walk.*** (The weather did not improve – fine weather is therefore an impossible condition.)

These types of conditions are used in three types of sentences, called first, second and third conditional sentences.

#### Imagined conditions: the first conditional

We use the first conditional to talk about the result of an imagined future situation, when we believe the imagined situation is quite likely:

[imagined future situation] *If the taxi doesn't come soon,* [future result] *I'll drive you myself.*

First conditional: form

conditional clause	main clause
<i>if + present simple</i>	modal verb with future meaning ( <i>shall/should/will/would/can/could/may/might</i> )
<i>If he gets a job in Liverpool,</i>	<i>he'll have to get up early. It's a long drive.</i>
<i>If Sheila rings,</i>	<i>I might ask her to come over for dinner.</i>

**Warning:**

We use the modal verb in the main clause, not in the conditional clause.

*If a lawyer reads the document, we will see if we've missed anything important.*

Not: *If a lawyer will read the document...*

#### Imagined conditions: the second conditional

We use the second conditional to talk about the possible result of an imagined situation in the present or future.

*If people complained, things would change.* (People don't complain at the moment.)

Second conditional: form

conditional clause	main clause
<i>if + past simple</i>	modal verb with future-in-the-past meaning ( <i>should/would/might/could</i> )
<i>If you asked her nicely,</i>	<i>she would say yes, I'm sure.</i>

We use a past form in the conditional clause to indicate a distance from reality, rather than indicating past time.

**Warning:**

We use *would* in the main clause, not in the conditional clause:

*If you decided to take the exam, you would have to register by 31 March.*

Not: *If you would decide to take the exam ...*

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**First and second conditional compared**

When we use the first conditional, we think the imagined situation is more likely to happen than when we use the second conditionals

**Compare**

first conditional	second conditional
<i>If the flight's late, we'll miss our connection.</i> (it's possible or likely that the flight will be late)	<i>If there <b>were</b> more buses, we <b>would</b> leave the car at home.</i> (it is unlikely that there will be more buses)
<i>I'll come and give a hand if you <b>need</b> help moving your stuff.</i> (it is possible or likely that you will need help)	<i>He <b>would</b> buy a flat if he <b>had</b> the money for a deposit.</i> (it is unlikely that he will have the money)

**Imagined conditions: the third conditional**

We use the third conditional when we imagine a different past, where something did or did not happen, and we imagine a different result:

- 1-*If I **had played** better, I **would have won**.* (I didn't play well and I didn't win.)
- 2-*It **would have been** easier if George **had brought** his own car.* (George didn't bring his own car, so the situation was difficult.)
- 3-*If the dog **hadn't barked**, we **wouldn't have known** there was someone in the*

*garden.* (The dog barked, so we knew there was someone in the garden.)

Third conditional: form

conditional clause	main clause
<i>if + past perfect</i>	modal verb with future-in-the-past meaning ( <i>should/would/might/could</i> ) + <i>have + -ed</i> form
<i>If they <b>had left</b> earlier;</i>	<i>they <b>would have arrived</b> on time.</i>

**Warning:**

We use *would have + -ed* in the main clause, not in the conditional clause:

*If he **had stayed** in the same room as Dave, it **would have been** a disaster.*

Not: *If he would have stayed ... it would have been a disaster.*

**Real conditionals**

Some conditions seem more real to us than others. Real conditionals refer to things that are true, that have happened, or are very likely to happen:

- 1-*If you park here, they clamp your wheels.* (It is always true that they clamp your wheels if, or every time, you park here.)
  - 2-*If I can't sleep, I listen to the radio.* (it is often true that I can't sleep, so I listen to the radio)
- In real conditional sentences, we can use the present simple or present continuous in both clauses for present situations, and the past

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simple or past continuous in both clauses for past situations. We can use these in various different combinations.

*always ready to help.* (Every time we wanted someone, we would ask our neighbour.)

**Present simple + present simple**

**1-If the weather *is* fine, we *eat* outside on the terrace.** (Every time this happens, this is what we do.)

**Present continuous + present simple**

**1-If the kids *are enjoying* themselves, we just *let* them go on playing till they're ready for bed.** (Every time this happens, this is what we do.)

**Present continuous + present continuous**

**1-If the economy *is growing* by 6%, then *it is growing* too fast.** (If it is true that the economy is growing by 6%, then it is true that it is growing too fast.)

**Past simple + past simple**

**1-If my father *had* a day off, we always *went* to see my granddad.** (Every time that happened in the past, that is what we did.)

**Past simple + past continuous**

*Kevin always **came** in to say hello if he **was going** past our house.* (Every time he was going past our house, that is what he did.)

We can also use modal verbs in the main clause:

**1-If we go out, we *can* usually *get* a baby sitter.** (Every time we go out, it is usually possible to get a babysitter.)

**2-If we wanted someone to fix something, we *would ask* our neighbour.** He was

**Types of conditional: summary**

The table shows how the main types of conditionals relate to one another.

true	likely/ possible	less likely/ less possible	imposs ible
real	first	second	third
<i>If it <b>snows</b>, we <b>get</b> ou r skis out.</i>  (We do this every time it snows.)	<i>If she <b>gets</b> the job, we'll celebrat e.</i>  (It is possible or likely she will get the job.)	<i>If we <b>had</b> more students , we <b>would</b> <b>run</b> the course.</i>  (It is less likely or unlikely that we will get more students	<i>If the rent. <b>had</b> <b>been</b> lower; I <b>would</b> <b>have</b> <b>taken</b> the flat.</i>  (The rent was not low

***If + should***

We can use *if* with *should* to refer to events which might happen by chance or by accident:

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*If you **should** bump into Carol, can you tell her I'm looking for her?* (If by chance you bump into Carol.)

*1-If the government **should** ever find itself in this situation again, it is to be hoped it would act more quickly.*

*2-If it really **would** save the planet, I'd stop using my car tomorrow.* (If it really is true that the planet would be saved as a result, I would stop using my car, but I doubt it is true.)

**Unless**

Conditional clauses can begin with *unless*. *Unless* means something similar to 'if ... not' or 'except if'.

The verb forms in the examples are similar to sentences with *if*: we use the present simple in the *unless*-clause and *shall*, *should*, *will*, *would*, *can*, *could*, *may* or *might* in the main clause:

***Unless** I **phone** you, you **can** assume the train's on time.* (If I do not phone you / except if I phone you, you can assume the train is on time.)

*We'll have to cancel the show **unless** we **sell** more tickets at the last minute.* (We'll have to cancel the show if we do not sell more tickets/except if we sell more tickets at the last minute.)

**Warning:**

We don't use *unless* for impossible conditions:

*If the government had **not** raised food prices, there would not have been so many protests.*

Not: Unless the government had raised food prices ...

**Warning:**

We don't use *unless* and *if* together:

*We'll go to the coast tomorrow **unless** it rains.*

Not: We'll go to the coast tomorrow unless if it rains.

We use the conjunction *unless* to mean 'except if'. The clause which follows *unless* is a subordinate clause (sc): it needs a main clause (mc) to make a complete sentence.

When *unless* comes before the main clause, we use a comma:

[SC]***Unless** it rains, [MC]we'll go for a picnic by the river tomorrow.* (We'll go for a picnic by the river tomorrow if it doesn't rain.)

When the main clause comes first, we don't need a comma:

[MC]*They won't come **unless** [SC]you invite them.*

*Unless* is a conditional word (like *if*), so we don't use *will* or *would* in the subordinate clause:

***Unless** I hear from you, I'll see you at two o'clock.*

Not: Unless I'll hear from you ...

**Unless and if ... not**

*Unless* and *if ... not* both mean 'except if':

*We could eat at Siam Smile **unless** they're closed on a Monday.* (or *We could eat at*

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*Siam Smile **if** they're **not** closed on a Monday.)*

*I'll make dinner **unless** somebody else wants to. (or I'll make dinner **if nobody** else wants to.)*

*Can you turn the radio off **unless** you're listening to it? (or Can you turn the radio off **if** you're **not** listening to it?)*

We don't use *unless* for things that we know to be true:

*You won't be able to get a ticket for the match **unless** you're prepared to pay a lot of money for it. (The speaker doesn't know if you're prepared to pay a lot of money for a ticket.)*

*I don't know what we would have done **if** we **hadn't** seen you. (We did see you.)*

Not: I don't know what we would have done unless we'd seen you.

**Typical errors**

- We don't use *unless* when we mean *if*.

*Pete will drive **if** Alex can't.*

Not: Pete will drive unless Alex can't.

- We don't use *will* or *would* in the clause after *unless*:

***Unless** you pay now, we can't guarantee you a ticket.*

Not: Unless you'll pay now ...