

Zero conditional (real conditional)

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar/intermediate-to-upper-intermediate/conditionals-1>

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/conditionals-if>

if/when + present simple, present simple

if/when + present continuous, present simple

Real conditionals refer to things that are generally true, that have happened, or are very likely to happen

- ❖ Ice melts if you heat it.
- ❖ When the sun goes down, it gets dark.
- ❖ If the weather is fine, we eat outside on the terrace. (Every time this happens, this is what we do.)
- 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.)

First conditional

Life Intermediate, SWAN

If/when/as soon as + present simple, + will/won't (main clause)

We use the first conditional to talk about future possibility and things which are generally true.

- ❖ If I have time, I'll call you tonight (future possibility)
- ❖ If you don't eat healthily, you won't feel good (generally true)
- ❖ When I finish my work, I'll get something to eat.

If + present simple, + present tense with future meaning (main clause)

- ❖ If we have fine weather tomorrow, I'm going to paint the windows.

Second conditional

If + past simple, would + infinitive without to (main clause)

To talk about unreal or improbable situations now or in the future, we use the second conditional.

- ❖ She would be perfectly happy if she had a car.
- ❖ What would you do if you lost your job?
- ❖ If I were rich, I would spend all my time travelling.

N.B. WERE →subjunctive. Was: acceptable in American English/informal contexts.

Third conditional

If + past perfect, modal verb (*should/would/might/could*) + have + past participle (main clause)

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

- ❖ If I had played better, I would have won. (I didn't play well and I didn't win)
- ❖ It would have been easier if George had brought his own car. (George didn't bring his own car, so the situation was difficult.)
- ❖ 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.)

► Conditionals (dictionary.Cambridge.org)

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

FIRST CONDITIONAL

If the weather improves, we'll go for a walk. (It is possible or likely that the weather will improve.) Situations we believe are real or possible.

SECOND CONDITIONAL

If the weather improved, we could go for a walk. (It is not likely that the weather will improve.) Situations that are impossible or unlikely in reality.

THIRD CONDITIONAL

If the weather had improved, we could have gone for a walk. (The weather did not improve - fine weather is therefore an impossible condition.) Situations that are impossible or unlikely in reality.