

# Grammar Reference

## Grammar Reference

### Unless

Unless is similar in meaning to **if not** and can be used instead of **if not** in certain types of conditional sentences. We normally use unless with present tenses when we are referring to the future:

You won't get in to see the show, if you don't have reserved seats. OR: **Unless** you have reserved seats, you won't get in to see the show.

Let's play tennis on Saturday, if it's not raining. OR: *Let's play tennis on Saturday, **unless** it's raining.*

I'll see you at the gym this evening, if you're not too tired. OR: *I'll see you at the gym this evening, **unless** you're too tired.*

#### Don't use 'unless' in questions

*What will you do if you don't pass those exams? If I don't pass those exams, I won't be able to study in Australia.*

#### Don't use 'unless' with would to talk about unreal future situations

*If he didn't take everything so seriously, he would be much easier to work with. If he weren't so bad-tempered, I would help him to get the work done*

#### Don't use 'unless' with would have to talk about unreal situations in the past either

*If you hadn't driven so recklessly, you wouldn't have had this accident. If you hadn't had that last glass of wine, this would never have happened.*

#### Use 'unless', and not if not, if we are introducing an idea as an afterthought

*I won't bother going to the meeting at the school tonight - **unless** you want to go, of course.*

### unless + past participle

Unless can be used with a past participle in a reduced clause when you choose to leave out the subject words and the auxiliary verbs in the brackets in the examples below:

*Don't shut down these computers **unless** (you are) instructed to do so. Just log off. Unless (he is) given sufficient warning of the consequences, he will continue to misbehave.*

However, this sounds quite formal and in spoken English we would normally keep subject words and auxiliary verbs.

### Answering negative questions

When a yes/no question is asked with a negative, it can be difficult to know what the correct way to respond is.

Think of a negative question as if it were a positive question and answer it like that!

**Aren't you going out tonight?** is the same as: **Are you going out tonight?** For both questions the answer will be the same.

**Yes, I am** = you are going out tonight.

**No, I'm not** = you are not going out.

