Conditional Use of Tense/ Conditional Sentence

A Conditional Sentence is a type of sentence which deals with condition.

e.g.

If you help me, I will help you.

Unless you love her, she won't love you.

A Conditional Sentence is made up of two clauses, i.e. Conditional Clause and Main Clause.

A Conditional Clause begins with the subordinate conjunctions such as, if, unless, whether, provided, provided that, supposing, supposing that, on condition that, as long as, so long as etc. It is not an independent clause but main clause is independent. A Conditional Clause always depends on the main clause for its meaning.

Types of Conditional Sentence:

i. Condition of Cause and Effect

ii. Hypothetical Condition

iii. Impossible Condition

Condition of Cause and Effect

1. Conditional Clause: Simple Present Tense

Main Clause (if indicating direct effect): Simple Present Tense

e.g.

If you heat butter, it melts.

If you throw a stone into water, it sinks.

If you heat water, it boils.

2. Conditional Clause: Simple Present Tense

Main Clause (if indicating indirect effect): (shall/will can/may/must+ V1) or Imperative structure

e.g.

If he does that again, I will punish him.

We shall be delighted if you join us.

What will happen if I go there?

If you buy that car, drive carefully.

If she comes, give her my love.

Lend me some if you have a lot.

Let him come if he wants.

3. Conditional Clause: Should + V1

Main Clause: (shall/will can/may/must+ V1) OR Imperative structure

e.g.

If he should wake up, I will talk to him.

If he should wake up, let her talk to him.

If she should come early, give it to her.

If it should prove to be true, I shall sell all my shares immediately.

['Should' Inverted]

Should he wake up, I will talk to him.

Should she come early, give it to her.

Should that happen, I will quit the job.

4. Conditional Clause: Imperative structure

Main Clause: shall/will can/may/must+ V1

Between the clauses: 'and'

e.g.

Give us the tools and we will finish the job.

Drive too fast and you will get killed.

Go to the doctor and he will give you some medicine.

Tell me the answer and I will give you a prize.

5. Conditional Clause: Imperative

Main Clause: shall/will can/may/must+ V1

Between the Clauses: or else

The phrase 'or else' takes the place of a Conditional Clause introduced by 'unless'.

e.g.

Take care, or else you may fall.

Put on your coat, or else you will catch cold.

Be careful, or else you will drop those plates.

Put that knife away, or else you will cut yourself

Hypothetical Condition

1. Conditional Clause: Simple Past Tense.

Main Clause: should/would/could/might+ V1

e.g.

If Mary saw him, she would be delighted.

If I asked you, would you help me?

If she had more money, she might dress more fashionably.

2. Conditional Clause: 'were to + V1

Main Clause: should, would, could, might + V1

e.g.

If he were to listen more carefully, he wouldn't make so many mistakes.

Do you think we should speak better if we were to study phonetics?

['Were to Inverted']

Were he to listen more carefully, he wouldn't make so many mistakes

Were it to stop raining, I should go for a walk.

3. Conditional Clause: were + noun / pronoun / adjective

Main Clause: should, would, could, might + v1

e.g.

If I were a bird, I would fly in the sky.

If I were you, I should help him.

Provided she were rich, she might buy a car.

[ ‘were’ inverted ]

Were I a bird, I would fly.

Were I you, I should help him.

Were she rich, she might buy a car.

Impossible Condition

Conditional Clause: Past Perfect Tense or Past Perfect Continuous Tense

Or,

Main Clause: should have, would have, could have, might have, must have + V3

e.g.

If she had been working well, they might have increased her salary.

I should never have troubled him if I had known he was so busy.

[‘Past Perfect Tense or Past Perfect Continuous Tense’]Inverted

Had she reached airport in time, she could not have missed her flight.

Had he been earning a lot of money, he would have bought a flat in Kathmandu.

EXERCISES

**A. Supply the correct tense of the verbs given in brackets.**

1. If you buy that car, it (cost) you Rs. 15,00,000.

2. Provided you (buy) that car, drive carefully.

3. Provided that you (go) to the doctor, you must pay.

4. If people (be) tired, they generally go to bed.

5. Go to the doctor and he (give) you some medicine.

6. Move and I (shoot) you.

7. Supposing you drink too much whisky, you (be) ill.

8. If the shops (be) open, buy some cold drinks.

9. Find a seat quickly, or else there (not be) any left.

10. Give me that immediately, or else I (get) angry.

11. (Marry) you me if I asked you?

12. Were the plane to crash, we all (kill).

13. Supposing that he were to present himself before me, I should soon (deal) with him.

14. Were the lecturer to speak louder, all the audience (hear).

15. He (miss) his train if he had not hurried.

16. The dog would have bitten you if it (not be tied) up.

17. Had the students studied harder, they (pass) their examinations.

18. Hadn't the window been open, the thief (not escape).

19. Had it not been a hot day, we (work) a lot in the field.

20. Should the mountain be too steep, we (not climb).

21. Should you meet him, (tell) him to come and see me.

**B. Supply the correct tense of the verbs in brackets.**

1. Students (learn) fast if the teacher is competent.

2. If you (throw) a stone into water, it sinks.

3. Give them an inch and they (take) a mile.

4. Leave them alone and they (come) home.

5. Provided that he comes, I (speak) to him.

6. What (happen) if she doesn't help me?

7. Lend me some if you (have) more money.

8. If the shops are open, (buy) some chocolates.

9. Say you are sorry, or else he never (forgive) you.

10. Take care, or else you (fall).

11. If Mary saw him, she (be) delighted.

12. Provided I (ask) you, would you help me?

13. If they really (try), they could easily win the prize.

14. If he (be) a gentleman, he should not say things like that!

15. Were they to arrive tomorrow, we (be) quite unprepared.

16. Were the plane to crash, we all (kill).

17. If they had been stronger, they (lift) the table.

18. We (play) tennis yesterday unless it had rained.

19. He (miss) his train unless he had been walking fast.

20. Would you have married me if I (love) you?

21. Had I known, I never (go).

22. Had it not been a hot day, we (work) a lot.

23. Unless you do what I say, I (not pay) you.

24. Should it prove to be true, I (sell) all my shares immediately.

25. Should he wake up, she (talk) to him.