

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

BHARAT SCHOOL OF BANKING – VELLORE-1

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

Conditional sentence type	Usage	If clause verb tense	Main clause verb tense
Zero	General truths	Simple present	Simple present
Type 1	A possible condition and its probable result	Simple present	Simple future
Type 2	A hypothetical condition and its probable result	Simple past	Present conditional or Present continuous conditional
Type 3	An unreal past condition and its probable result in the past	Past perfect	Perfect conditional
Mixed type	An unreal past condition and its probable result in the present		

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ZERO CONDITIONAL

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

If clause (condition)	Main clause (result)
If + simple present	simple present
If this thing happens	that thing happens.

As in all conditional sentences, the order of the clauses is not fixed. You may have to rearrange the pronouns and adjust punctuation when you change the order of the clauses, but the meaning is identical. **In zero conditional sentences, you can replace "if" with "when", because both express general truths.** The meaning will be unchanged.

EXAMPLES

- If you heat ice, it melts.
- Ice melts if you heat it.
- When you heat ice, it melts.
- Ice melts when you heat it.
- If it rains, the grass gets wet.
- The grass gets wet if it rains.
- When it rains, the grass gets wet.

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- The grass gets wet when it rains.

FUNCTION

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

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.

The zero conditional is also often used to give instructions, using the imperative in the main clause.

EXAMPLES

- If Bill phones, tell him to meet me at the cinema.
- Ask Pete if you're not sure what to do.
- If you want to come, call me before 5:00.
- Meet me here if we get separated.

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TYPE 1 CONDITIONAL

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)	Main clause (result)
If + simple present	simple future
If this thing happens	that thing will happen.

As in all conditional sentences, the order of the clauses is not fixed. You may have to rearrange the pronouns and adjust punctuation when you change the order of the clauses, but the meaning is identical.

EXAMPLES

- If it rains, you will get wet.
- You will get wet if it rains.
- If Sally is late again I will be mad.
- I will be mad if Sally is late again.
- If you don't hurry, you will miss the bus.
- You will miss the bus if you don't hurry.

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FUNCTION

The type 1 conditional **refers to a possible condition and its probable result**. These sentences 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**. In type 1 conditional sentences, the time is the **present or future** and the situation is **real**.

EXAMPLES

- If I have time, I'll finish that letter.
- What will you do if you miss the plane?
- Nobody will notice if you make a mistake.
- If you drop that glass, it will break.
- If you don't drop the gun, I'll shoot!
- If you don't leave, I'll call the police.

In type 1 conditional sentences, **you can also use modals in the main clause instead of the future tense to express the degree of certainty, permission, or a recommendation about the outcome**.

EXAMPLES

- If you drop that glass, it might break.
- I may finish that letter if I have time.

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- If he calls you, you should go.
- If you buy my school supplies for me, I will be able to go to the park.

TYPE 2 CONDITIONAL

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 or the [present continuous conditional](#).

If clause (condition)	Main clause (result)
If + simple past	present conditional or present continuous c
If this thing happened	that thing would happen.

As in all conditional sentences, the order of the clauses is not fixed. You may have to rearrange the pronouns and adjust punctuation when you change the order of the clauses, but the meaning is identical.

EXAMPLES

- If it rained, you would get wet.
- You would get wet if it rained.
- If you went to bed earlier you wouldn't be so tired.
- You wouldn't be so tired if you went to bed earlier.
- If she fell, she would hurt herself.

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- She would hurt herself if she fell.

FUNCTION

The type 2 conditional **refers to an unlikely or hypothetical condition and its probable result**. These sentences are not based on the actual situation. In type 2 conditional sentences, the time is **now or any time** and the situation is **hypothetical (imaginary)**.

EXAMPLES

- If the weather wasn't so bad, we would go to the park. (But the weather is bad so we can't go.)
- If I was the Queen of England, I would give everyone a chicken. (But I am not the Queen.)
- If you really loved me, you would buy me a diamond ring.
- If I knew where she lived, I would go and see her.

It is correct, and very common, to say "if I were" instead of "if I was" (subjunctive mood).

EXAMPLES

- If I were taller, I would buy this dress.
- If I were 20, I would travel the world.
- If I were you, I would give up smoking.
- If I were a plant, I would love the rain.

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In type 2 conditional sentences, you can also use modals in the main clause instead of "would" to express the degree of certainty, permission, or a recommendation about the outcome.

EXAMPLES

- We might buy a larger house if we had more money
- He could go to the concert if you gave him your ticket.
- If he called me, I couldn't hear.

THE PRESENT CONDITIONAL TENSE

The present conditional of any verb is composed of two elements:

would + the infinitive of the main verb, without "to"

Subject	+ would	+ infinitive
He	would	go
They	would	stay

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TO GO: PRESENT CONDITIONAL

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative	Interrogative Negative
I would go	I wouldn't go	Would I go?	Wouldn't I go?
You would go	You wouldn't go	Would you go?	Wouldn't you go?
He would go	He wouldn't go	Would he go?	Wouldn't he go?
She would go	She wouldn't go	Would she go?	Wouldn't she go?
We would go	We wouldn't go	Would we go?	Wouldn't we go?
They would go	They wouldn't go	Would they go?	Wouldn't they go?

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TYPE 3 CONDITIONAL

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 or the [perfect continuous conditional](#).

If clause (condition)	Main clause (result)
If + past perfect	perfect conditional or perfect continuous conditional
If this thing had happened	that thing would have happened.

As in all conditional sentences, the order of the clauses is not fixed. You may have to rearrange the pronouns and adjust punctuation when you change the order of the clauses, but the meaning is identical.

EXAMPLES

- If it had rained, you would have gotten wet.
- You would have gotten wet if it had rained.
- You would have passed your exam if you had worked harder.
- If you had worked harder, you would have passed your exam.

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- I would have believed you if you hadn't lied to me before.
- If you hadn't lied to me before, I would have believed you.

FUNCTION

The type 3 conditional refers to an impossible condition in the past and its probable result in the past. These sentences are truly hypothetical and unreal, because it is now too late for the condition or its result to exist. There is always some implication of regret with type 3 conditional sentences. The reality is the opposite of, or contrary to, what the sentence expresses. In type 3 conditional sentences, the time is the **past** and the situation is **hypothetical**.

EXAMPLES

- 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 had known you were coming I would have baked a cake. (But I didn't know and I didn't bake a cake.)
- I would have been happy if you had called me on my birthday. (But you didn't call me and I am not happy.)

In type 3 conditional sentences, you can also use modals in the main clause instead of "would" to express the degree of certainty, permission, or a recommendation about the outcome.

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EXAMPLES

- If I had worked harder I might have passed the exam.
- You could have been on time if you had caught the bus.
- If he called you, you could go.
- If you bought my school supplies for me, I might be able to go to the park.

CONTRACTIONS

Both *would* and *had* can be contracted to '*d*', which can be confusing if you are not confident with type 3 conditional sentences. Remember 2 rules:

1. ***would* never appears in the if-clause** so if '*d*' appears in the if clause, it must be abbreviating *had*.
2. ***had* never appears before *have*** so if '*d*' appears on a pronoun just before *have*, it must be abbreviating *would*.

EXAMPLES

- If **I'd** known you were in hospital, **I'd** have visited you.
- If **I had** known you were in hospital, **I would** have visited you.
- **I'd** have bought you a present if **I'd** known it was your birthday.

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- **I would** have bought you a present if **I had** known it was your birthday.
- If **you'd** given me your e-mail, **I'd** have written to you.
- If **you had** given me your e-mail, **I would** have written to you.

THE PERFECT CONDITIONAL TENSE

The perfect conditional of any verb is composed of three elements:

would + have + past participle

Have followed by the past participle is used in other constructions as well. it is called the "perfect infinitive".

Subject	+ would	+ have	+ past participle
He	would	have	gone
They	would	have	stayed

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TO GO: PERFECT CONDITIONAL

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative	Interrogative Negative
I would have gone	I wouldn't have gone	Would I have gone?	Wouldn't I have gone?
You would have gone	You wouldn't have gone	Would you have gone?	Wouldn't you have gone?
He would have gone	He wouldn't have gone	Would he have gone?	Wouldn't he have gone?
She would have gone	She wouldn't have gone	Would she have gone?	Wouldn't she have gone?
We would have gone	We wouldn't have gone	Would we have gone?	Wouldn't we have gone?
They would have gone	They wouldn't have gone	Would they have gone?	Wouldn't they have gone?

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MIXED CONDITIONAL

It is possible for the two parts of a conditional sentence to refer to different times, and the resulting sentence is a "mixed conditional" sentence. There are two types of mixed conditional sentence.

PRESENT RESULT OF A PAST CONDITION

In this type of mixed conditional sentence, the tense in the 'if' clause is the past perfect, and the tense in the main clause is the present conditional.

If clause (condition)	Main clause (result)
If + past perfect	present conditional
If this thing had happened	that thing would happen.

As in all conditional sentences, the order of the clauses is not fixed. You may have to rearrange the pronouns and adjust punctuation when you change the order of the clauses, but the meaning is identical.

EXAMPLES

- If I had worked harder at school, I would have a better job now.

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- I would have a better job now if I had worked harder at school.
- If we had looked at the map we wouldn't be lost.
- We wouldn't be lost if we had looked at the map.
- If you had caught that plane you would be dead now.
- You would be dead now if you had caught that plane.

FUNCTION

This type of **mixed conditional refers to an unreal past condition and its probable result in the present. These sentences express a situation which is contrary to reality both in the past and in the present.** In these mixed conditional sentences, the time is the **past** in the "if" clause and in the **present** in the main clause.

EXAMPLES

- If I had studied I would have my driving license. (but I didn't study and now I don't have my license)
- I would be a millionaire now if I had taken that job. (but I didn't take the job and I'm not a millionaire)
- If you had spent all your money, you wouldn't buy this jacket. (but you didn't spend all your money and now you can buy this jacket)

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In these mixed conditional sentences, you can also use modals in the main clause instead of *would* to express the degree of certainty, permission, or a recommendation about the outcome.

EXAMPLES

- If you had crashed the car, you might be in trouble.
- I could be a millionaire now if I had invested in ABC Plumbing.
- If I had learned to ski, I might be on the slopes right now.

PAST RESULT OF PRESENT OR CONTINUING CONDITION

FORM

In this second type of mixed conditional sentence, the tense in the 'if' clause is the simple past, and the tense in the main clause is the perfect conditional.

If clause (condition)	Main clause (result)
If + simple past	perfect conditional
If this thing happened	that thing would have happened.

As in all conditional sentences, the order of the clauses is not fixed. You may have to rearrange the pronouns and adjust

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punctuation when you change the order of the clauses, but the meaning is identical.

EXAMPLES

- If I wasn't afraid of spiders, I would have picked it up.
- I would have picked it up if I wasn't afraid of spiders.
- If we didn't trust him we would have sacked him months ago.
- We would have sacked him months ago if we didn't trust him.
- If I wasn't in the middle of another meeting, I would have been happy to help you.
- I would have been happy to help you if I wasn't in the middle of another meeting.

FUNCTION

These mixed conditional sentences refer to an unreal present situation and its probable (but unreal) past result. In these mixed conditional sentences, the time in the if clause is **now or always** and the time in the main clause is **before now**. For example, "If I wasn't afraid of spiders" is contrary to present reality. I am afraid of spiders. "I would have picked it up" is contrary to past reality. I didn't pick it up.

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EXAMPLES

- If she wasn't afraid of flying she wouldn't have travelled by boat.
- I'd have been able to translate the letter if my Italian was better.
- If I was a good cook, I'd have invited them to lunch.
- If the elephant wasn't in love with the mouse, she'd have trodden on him by now.