First Conditional

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FIRST CONDITIONAL

A. Introduction to Conditionals

Conditionals are used to express a hypothetical situation. This is when you don’t know if something will happen or not, so you make a guess about what the result might be. There are four conditional patterns in the English language, and they usually involve an “if” clause. This lesson will focus on the first conditional, also known as the real conditional.

B. The First Conditional

Pattern: If + present, will + base verb

Use: The first conditional shows a likely or possible outcome that will probably happen if a certain condition is met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• If I study for the test, I will get a good grade.</td>
<td>studying</td>
<td>good grade</td>
<td>Studying makes it likely that I will get a good grade on the test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I will get a good grade if I study for the test.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If Mr. Smith has a second cup of coffee, he will probably be late for work.</td>
<td>second cup of coffee</td>
<td>late for work</td>
<td>Having another cup of coffee makes it possible that Mr. Smith will be late.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mr. Smith will probably be late for work if he has a second cup of coffee.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tip #1

The verb in the if clause is a simple present verb, and the verb in the main clause is will + the base form of the verb. A sentence can begin with either clause with no change in meaning. Remember that a sentence that begins with an if clause is followed by a comma.

• If it’s sunny tomorrow, they will go to the beach.
• They will go to the beach if it’s sunny tomorrow.
B. The First Conditional cont.

### Examples cont.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• If they rehearse a lot, they'll be ready for their concert next weekend.</td>
<td>rehearsing</td>
<td>ready for concert</td>
<td>Rehearsing makes it likely that they will be ready to play at their upcoming concert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• They'll be ready for their concert next weekend if they rehearse a lot.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If she doesn’t buy a new suit, she won’t have anything to wear to the interview.</td>
<td>new suit</td>
<td>something to wear to the interview</td>
<td>Not buying a new suit means she won’t have an appropriate interview outfit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• She won’t have anything to wear to the interview if she doesn’t buy a new suit.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tip #2**

It is possible to have a **negative** verb in the *if clause*, the main clause, or both. The contraction of *will not* is *won’t*.

• If I **don’t pass** this test, my parents will be very angry.
• If I forget to water the plants, they **won’t survive**.
• If I’m not **late** for work again, I **won’t have** to look for another job.

**Tip #3**

The verb in the *if clauses* will end in *-s* if the subject is third person singular.

• If she **watches** that sad movie, she will cry.
• She will cry if she **watches** that sad movie.

**Tip #4**

Though not as common, it is possible to use **be going to + base verb** or the **present progressive** (which are the two other ways of forming the simple future in English) in place of *will + base verb* with no change in meaning.

For example, these sentences all have the same meaning:

• If it doesn’t rain, we **will go** for a walk. *(will + V)*
• If it doesn’t rain, we are **going to go** for a walk. *(be going to + V)*
• If it doesn’t rain, we **are going** for a walk. *(be + -ing V)*
Exercise 1

MULTIPLE-CHOICE

Circle the best answer.

Ex. My mother will be angry if I _____ late for school again.
   a) be  
   b) is  
   c) am  

1. If she goes to the birthday party on Sunday, she ______ a present.
   a) takes  
   b) will take  
   c) take  

2. I ______ the doctor if my stomach still hurts tomorrow.
   a) will call  
   b) called  
   c) call  

3. She will do the exercise again if she ______ a lot of mistakes.
   a) will make  
   b) makes  
   c) make  

4. If they practise a lot, they ______ the game next weekend.
   a) wins  
   b) win  
   c) will win  

5. I will take my umbrella if it ______ tomorrow.
   a) rains  
   b) raining  
   c) will rain  

6. She will marry him if he ______ her.
   a) will ask  
   b) ask  
   c) asks  

7. If we go out tonight, we ______ the door.
   a) will lock  
   b) locks  
   c) lock  

8. I will make a sandwich if I ______ hungry.
   a) is  
   b) will be  
   c) am
Exercise 2

FILL IN THE BLANKS

Fill in the blanks using the correct form of the verb provided.

Ex. If Robert ________ goes ________ to bed late tonight, he ________ will sleep in ________.

1. If he ________ sleep in ________, he ________ miss ________ his bus.

2. If he ________ miss ________ the bus, he ________ be ________ late for work.

3. If he ________ be ________ late for work, his boss ________ be ________ angry.

4. If Robert’s boss ________ be ________ angry, he ________ fire ________ him.

5. If Robert ________ lose ________ his job, his girlfriend ________ get ________ upset with him.

6. If Robert’s girlfriend ________ get ________ upset again, she ________ break up ________ with him.

7. If she ________ break up ________ with him, he ________ be ________ lonely.

8. If Robert ________ feel ________ lonely, he ________ call ________ some friends.

9. If Robert ________ call ________ his friends, they ________ ask ________ him to their party.

10. If Robert ________ go ________ to the party, he ________ drink ________ too much beer.

11. If Robert ________ drink ________ too much beer, he ________ need ________ a ride home.

12. If Robert ________ need ________ a ride home, he ________ have to ________ stay until the end of the party.

13. If Robert ________ stay ________ until the end of the party, he ________ get ________ home very late.

14. If Robert ________ get ________ home late, he ________ go ________ to bed late.

And you know what will happen if Robert goes to bed late again!
Exercise 3

MATCHING

Match the first part of the sentence on the left with the most logical ending on the right. Each choice can only be used once.

1. If you eat too much candy...  
   a) if you babysit your little sister tonight.
2. If you don’t study...     
   b) the teacher will keep you in after class.
3. You will have bad dreams... 
   c) I won’t let you have any dessert.
4. If you eat lots of vegetables... 
   d) I will buy you a treat.
5. You will burn yourself... 
   e) you will be healthy.
6. If you are late for school... 
   f) you will play beautifully.
7. If you practise the piano every night... 
   g) you will fail your exam.
8. If you don’t finish your dinner... 
   h) your teeth will hurt.
9. If you behave nicely... 
   i) if you watch a scary movie before bed.
10. I will pay you ten dollars... 
       j) if you play with matches.

Exercise 4

COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

Complete the following sentences using your own words.

Ex. You won’t feel good if you eat that entire pizza.
   1. If you don’t water the plants, ________________________________
   2. If you wash your wool clothes in hot water, ________________________________
   3. If you eat too many sweets, ________________________________
   4. If you don’t wear sunscreen, ________________________________
   5. I will read you a bedtime story if ________________________________
   6. You will be punished if ________________________________
   7. If you drive too fast, ________________________________
   8. You’ll be tired in the morning if ________________________________
Exercise 5

NEGATIVE SENTENCES

Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verb provided.

Ex. We ___________ won’t play ___________ tennis tomorrow if it ___________ rains ___________.
   (not/play)  (rain)

1. She ___________ let ___________ the children play in the house if they ___________ make ___________ too much noise.
   (not/make)

2. If we ___________ hurrying ___________ , we ___________ missing ___________ our plane.
   (not/hurry)  (miss)

3. The bee ___________ sting ___________ you if you ___________ moving ___________.
   (not/move)

4. If you ___________ speaking ___________ more loudly, no one ___________ hearing ___________ you.
   (not/speak)  (hear)

5. We ___________ being ___________ late if we ___________ taking ___________ the car.
   (not/take)

6. If it ___________ being ___________ hot tomorrow, we ___________ going ___________ to the beach.
   (not/be)  (go)

7. If you ___________ taking ___________ your umbrella, you ___________ getting ___________ wet.
   (not/take)  (get)

8. You ___________ passing ___________ your test if you ___________ studying ___________ harder.
   (not/pass)  (not/study)

9. If he ___________ finding ___________ a job soon, she ___________ marrying ___________ him.
   (not/find)  (not/marry)

10. They ___________ forgiving ___________ you if you ___________ saying ___________ you’re sorry.
    (not/say)

11. The bank ___________ lending ___________ you money if you ___________ having ___________ a good job.
    (not/have)

12. If you ___________ cleaning ___________ your room, your mother ___________ letting ___________ you go to the movie tonight.
    (not/let)

13. If you ___________ quitting ___________ smoking, you ___________ getting ___________ sick.
    (not/quit)  (get)

14. You ___________ being ___________ able ___________ to sleep if you ___________ watching ___________ that horror movie.
    (not/be able)  (watch)

15. If you ___________ setting ___________ your alarm clock, you ___________ waking ___________ up on time.
    (not/wake)

16. You ___________ improving ___________ if you ___________ practising ___________.
    (not/improve)  (not/practise)
Exercise 6

SCRAMBLED SENTENCES

A. Main Clause + If Clause

Put the words in the correct order to make conditional sentences. Start each sentence with the main clause.

Ex. works will she hard boss give a the raise if her

*The boss will give her a raise if she works hard.*

1. we if is cancel the bad will the weather game

2. she car if will doesn't take the start bus her

3. I am your will if come to I not party busy

4. if will umbrella it take rains I an

B. If Clause + Main Clause

Put the words in the correct order to make conditional sentences. Start each sentence with the if clause.

Ex. works will she hard boss give a the raise if her

*If she works hard, the boss will give her a raise.*

1. if put will in fridge you the go don't milk the it sour

2. garden don't plants if grow the water the won't you

3. next beach go the sunny we if weekend it's will to

4. we if sold concert too out long wait the be will
Exercise 7

SUPERSTITIONS

Many cultures have similar superstitions. For example:

• If you break a mirror, you will have seven years of bad luck.
• If you pull out a grey hair, ten more will grow in its place.

A. Matching

Work with a partner or in small groups. Read the first part of the superstitions and try to match them with the correct endings. If you have never heard of these superstitions, use your imagination and have fun!

____ 1. If you step on a crack, a) you will have to pay someone a lot of money.
____ 2. If your right eye twitches, b) you will soon be kissed by a fool.
____ 3. If the bottom of your foot itches, c) your house will burn down.
____ 4. If you blow out all the candles on your birthday cake in one blow, d) there will soon be a birth in your family.
____ 5. If the palm of your left hand itches, e) you will never marry.
____ 6. If you are a bridesmaid three times, f) it will keep the doctor away.
____ 7. If a bee enters your house, g) your wish will come true.
____ 8. If you say goodbye to a friend on a bridge, h) you will know how many children you will have.
____ 9. If you see a swarm of bees on your roof, i) you will soon have a visitor.
____ 10. If your nose itches, j) you will break your mother’s back.
____ 11. If you eat an apple every day, k) you will never see each other again.
____ 12. If you cut an apple in half and count how many seeds are inside, l) you will take a trip soon.

B. Writing

Write three superstitions from your own culture using the first conditional.

1. _________________________________________________________________
2. _________________________________________________________________
3. _________________________________________________________________
## Exercise 8

### SURVEY

Work in small groups. Complete the chart below by asking three of your classmates the following questions. Answer using the first conditional.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>If you go to a restaurant this weekend, what will you order?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If the teacher gives a lot of homework tonight, will you have time to finish it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If the weather is beautiful on the weekend, what will you do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>If you catch a bad cold this week, what will you do/take for it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>If you go to a movie this weekend, what will you see?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>If you watch TV tonight, what will you watch?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>If you take a trip soon, where will you go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>If you buy a new boat, what colour will it be?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>If you have dessert tonight, what will you have?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>If you visit a friend this week, who will it be?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise 9

QUIZ

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. If you ______ carefully, you'll know what to do.
   a) will think
   b) think
   c) thinks

2. If she goes out tonight, she ______ it tomorrow morning.
   a) regret
   b) regrets
   c) will regret

3. I will send you a postcard if you ______ me your address.
   a) give
   b) gives
   c) will give

4. My brother will miss his appointment if he ______ late.
   a) will be
   b) are
   c) is

5. If he ______ a pizza, he will eat the whole thing.
   a) orders
   b) will order
   c) order

6. They ______ out for dinner if there is no food in the house.
   a) will go
   b) goes
   c) go

7. If the weather is bad, we ______ the picnic.
   a) cancel
   b) will cancel
   c) cancels

8. If I ______ late, my parents will be angry.
   a) will be
   b) am
   c) is

9. My coworkers ______ the report today if they finish it.
   a) hands in
   b) hand in
   c) will hand in

10. If that painting is still for sale, we ______ it.
    a) buy
    b) will buy
    c) buys

11. If their grandmother ______, they will sing a song to her.
    a) call
    b) will call
    c) calls

12. My manager ______ about the meeting if I don't remind her.
    a) forgets
    b) forget
    c) will forget
Answer Key

**Exercise 1**

1. b  3. b  5. a  7. a
2. a  4. c  6. c  8. c

**Exercise 2**

1. sleeps in, will miss 8. feels, will call
2. misses, will be 9. calls, will ask
3. is, will be 10. goes, will drink
4. is, will fire 11. drinks, will need
5. loses, will get 12. needs, will have to
6. gets, will break up 13. stays, will get
7. breaks up, will be 14. gets, will go

**Exercise 3**

1. h  3. i  5. j  7. f  9. d
2. g  4. e  6. b  8. c  10. a

**Exercise 4**

Answers will vary. Here are some samples:

1. If you don't water the plants, they will die.
2. If you wash your wool clothes in hot water, they will shrink.
3. If you eat too many sweets, you will get a stomachache.
4. If you don't wear sunscreen, you will get a sunburn.
5. I will read you a bedtime story if you get into your pyjamas quickly.
6. You will be punished if you behave badly.
7. If you drive too fast, you will get a speeding ticket.
8. You'll be tired in the morning if you stay up late again.

**Exercise 5**

1. will let, don't make 10. won't forgive, don't say
2. don't hurry, will miss 11. won't lend, don't have
3. won't sting, don't move 12. don't clean, won't let
4. don't speak, will hear 13. don't quit, will get
5. will be, don't take 14. won't be able, watch
6. isn't, won't go 15. don't set, won't wake
7. don't take, will get 16. won't improve, don't practise
8. won't pass, don't study
9. doesn't find, won't marry

**Exercise 6**

A. **MAIN CLAUSE + IF CLAUSE**

1. We will cancel the game if the weather is bad.
2. She will take the bus if her car doesn't start.
3. I will come to your party if I am not busy.
4. I will take an umbrella if it rains.

B. **IF CLAUSE + MAIN CLAUSE**

1. The milk will go sour if you don't put it in the fridge.
2. If you don't water the plants, the garden won't grow.
3. If it's sunny next weekend, we will go to the beach. / If it's sunny, we will go to the beach next weekend.
4. If we wait too long, the concert will be sold out.

(continued on the next page...)
Answer Key cont.

**Exercise 7**

**A. MATCHING**

1. j 3. l 5. a 7. i 9. c 11. f
2. d 4. g 6. e 8. k 10. b 12. h

**B. WRITING**

Answers will vary. Here are some samples:

1. If a black cat crosses your path, you will have bad luck.
2. If you find a four-leaf clover, you will have good luck.
3. If you walk under a ladder, you will have bad luck.

**Exercise 8**

Answers will vary.

**Exercise 9**

1. b 3. a 5. a 7. b 9. c 11. c
2. c 4. c 6. a 8. b 10. b 12. c

**Extra Practice I**

On page 14, you will find a page of strips to cut up. Cut the *if* and *main* clauses into strips and give one clause to each student. Have the students search the room for the matching clause to complete the sentence (note that there is more than one possibility in some cases—you can accept any logical, reasonable match). As an alternative task, give each pair or group a set of mixed-up strips and have them arrange all the strips into the correct order. These tasks would work well as a warm-up to this lesson or for review later on.

**Extra Practice II**

On page 15, you will find a comparison chart with all four conditional tenses. Comparing all the conditional tenses at once can be helpful for students to see when and why each is used. If you think your students can handle it, present the chart before or after the First Conditional lesson. You can find more help and practice on our blog ([http://blog.esllibrary.com/2013/03/14/an-easy-way-to-teach-conditionals/](http://blog.esllibrary.com/2013/03/14/an-easy-way-to-teach-conditionals/)) and in our Grammar Practice Worksheets section ([https://esllibrary.com/courses/88/lessons](https://esllibrary.com/courses/88/lessons)). In that section, you’ll find our lessons on the Second and Third Conditional.
## Extra Practice I

### SENTENCE STRIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If I set my alarm,</th>
<th>I won’t sleep in.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If she gains more weight,</td>
<td>she’ll go on a diet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If they aren’t more careful,</td>
<td>they’ll have an accident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If they have a baby girl,</td>
<td>they will name her Maria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the police catch the robber,</td>
<td>they will take him to jail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If he has a toothache,</td>
<td>he’ll go to the dentist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I have a headache,</td>
<td>I’ll take some aspirin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If he starts to lose his hair,</td>
<td>he’ll buy a wig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If our power goes out,</td>
<td>we’ll light some candles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If my car isn’t fixed,</td>
<td>I’ll have to take the bus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you don’t wear a coat,</td>
<td>you might catch a cold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there isn’t any snow,</td>
<td>we won’t be able to go skiing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If he’s late for work again,</td>
<td>his boss will fire him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If we don’t hurry,</td>
<td>we’ll miss our bus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If they don’t have enough money for the car,</td>
<td>they’ll borrow some from the bank.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you don’t pay attention in class,</td>
<td>you won’t understand the lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the floor is wet,</td>
<td>you might slip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you aren’t satisfied with your purchase,</td>
<td>the store will give you your money back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I send the parcel by airmail,</td>
<td>it will arrive much faster.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Extra Practice II**

**CONDITIONAL COMPARISON CHART**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Zero Conditional      | If + present, present    | Present   | Use this conditional to show an outcome that happens if a specific repeated condition is met. | • If he takes vitamins every day, he doesn't get sick.  
                          |                          |                        |                                                                          | • He doesn't get sick if he takes vitamins every day.          |
| First Conditional     | If + present, will + verb| Present/  | Use this conditional to show a likely or possible outcome that will probably happen if a specific condition is met. | • If she studies for the test, she will get a good grade.  
                          |                          | Future                |                                                                          | • She will get a good grade if she studies for the test.          |
| Second Conditional    | If + past, would + verb  | Present/  | Use this conditional to show an unlikely or impossible outcome that probably wouldn’t happen (unless a specific condition were met). | **Unlikely** situation  
                          |                          | Future                |                                                                          | • If he won the lottery, he would quit his job.  
                          |                          |                        |                                                                          | • He would quit his job if he won the lottery.          |
|                       |                          |           |                                                                          | **Impossible** situation  
                          |                          |                        |                                                                          | • If I had wings, I would fly to Antarctica.  
                          |                          |                        |                                                                          | • I would fly to Antarctica if I had wings.          |
| Third Conditional     | If + had + p.p.,         | Past      | Use this conditional to show a past regret or different outcome that would have happened if a specific condition had been met. | • If I had remembered to call my friend last night, she wouldn’t have sent me an angry text message.  
                          | would + have + p.p.      |                        |                                                                          | • My friend wouldn’t have sent me an angry text message if I had remembered to call her last night. |

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