

# Conditionals: Overview

## 1. ZERO AND FIRST CONDITIONALS: POSSIBLE CONDITIONS IN THE PRESENT OR FUTURE:

### FORM: IF CLAUSE

If + Simple Present

### MAIN CLAUSE

Simple Present OR Simple Future

- When the SIMPLE PRESENT is used in the main clause, it expresses a repeated action or a fact or general truth.

*Examples: If I don't go to bed early, I'm always tired at work the next morning.*

*If water reaches zero degrees Celsius, it freezes.*

- When the SIMPLE FUTURE is used in the main clause, it expresses a specific activity or situation which may take place in the future.

*Examples: If I have time, I will help you with your paper tonight.*

*If it snows, I might go skiing.*

*If I am late for class, I can't enter the room until after the break.*

NOTE: Modals can also be used in the main clause.

## 2. SECOND CONDITIONALS (UNREAL SITUATIONS) IN THE PRESENT OR FUTURE

### FORM: IF CLAUSE

If + Simple Past,

### MAIN CLAUSE

Would + Base Verb

Other Past Tense Modals

- This conditional is used to express an imaginary, hypothetical situation in the present time. The situation is contrary to what is actually real at the time of speaking.
- Although the form is in the past, the situation is in the present time.
- It is also used to give advice. **NOTE:** With the verb “to be” **WERE** is the only form used in this situation.

*Examples: If I taught this class, I wouldn't give any tests. (I don't teach this class.)*

*If I had enough time, I could extend my stay in this country. (I don't have enough time.)*

*If I were you, I would marry him. (I'm not you.)*

### 3. THIRD IMPOSSIBLE CONDITIONS (UNREAL SITUATIONS) IN THE PAST

FORM: IF CLAUSE

If + Past Perfect,

MAIN CLAUSE

Would + Present Perfect

Other Past Tense Modals + Present Perfect

- This conditional is used to express an imaginary, hypothetical situation in the past. We know that the situation cannot be accomplished because the sentence refers only to past events.
- It is also used to express regret.

*Examples: If I had known about the meeting, I would have gone. (I didn't know.)*

*If I hadn't fallen off the ladder, I wouldn't have sprained my foot. (I fell.)*

*If she had truly loved him, she wouldn't have left him. (She didn't truly love him.)*

*Answer the questions with 'yes' or 'no'.*

1. If he were a pilot, he would fly everywhere.
  - (a) Does he want to fly everywhere? \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) Is he going to fly everywhere? \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) Is he a pilot? \_\_\_\_\_
2. If I didn't have any money, I would be destitute.
  - (a) Am I destitute? \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) Do I have any money? \_\_\_\_\_
3. If Barbara had wanted my help, she would have asked me.
  - (a) Did she ask me for help? \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) Did she want my help? \_\_\_\_\_
4. If Ruth and Rebecca, who are sisters, answered the phone without identifying themselves, I wouldn't be able to tell their voices apart.
  - (a) Do Ruth and Rebecca answer the phone without identifying themselves? \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) Can I tell their voices apart? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Richard wouldn't have been late for his meeting if he hadn't had an accident.

(a) Was Richard late for his meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Did he have an accident? \_\_\_\_\_

*Fill in the blanks with the correct CONDITIONAL form.*

1. If I have enough sugar, I (bake) \_\_\_\_\_ a coffee cake this afternoon.
2. I would paint my bike if I (have) \_\_\_\_\_ some spare time.
3. I (not be) \_\_\_\_\_ studying at Centre Linguista if English (be) \_\_\_\_\_ my native language.
4. Grace didn't finish the report yesterday. If she (finish) \_\_\_\_\_ the report yesterday, she (tell) \_\_\_\_\_ me.
5. It's too bad Kevin isn't here. If he (be) \_\_\_\_\_ here, he (know) \_\_\_\_\_ how to fix the photocopier.
6. I (make) \_\_\_\_\_ a pie for the bake sale if my oven (be) \_\_\_\_\_ working.
7. Mark got overlooked for the promotion because he didn't work hard. However, if he (work) \_\_\_\_\_ hard, he (get) \_\_\_\_\_ the promotion.
8. Sharon always closes her office door if she (be) \_\_\_\_\_ with a client.
9. If Carl (be) \_\_\_\_\_ free, he would have gone with you.
10. It sounds like a fantastic party. If I (be) \_\_\_\_\_ you I (attend) \_\_\_\_\_.
11. If he had spoken louder she (answer) \_\_\_\_\_ his question.
12. If she didn't exercise every day, she (have) \_\_\_\_\_ less energy.
13. If she \_\_\_\_\_ (take) her teacher's advice, she would be in college by now.
14. If the weather (be) \_\_\_\_\_ too cold tomorrow, we will cancel the activity.