

Conditionals: With Only If, Unless, If Not, Even Though, Even If

“**Only If**” and “**Unless**” refer to exclusive conditions (the only condition under which an event will occur).

FORM affirmative main clause + only if + conditional clause
 affirmative main clause + unless + conditional clause (negative implication)
 negative main clause + unless + conditional clause

USE “**Only if**” is used with affirmative main clauses. It means “only on the condition that”. **Unless**” is used with affirmative and negative main clauses. With a negative main clause it means “except on the condition that”. With an affirmative clause, it has a negative meaning.

EXAMPLES *I can go to the party Saturday only if I finish studying for the test.*
I have to stay home Saturday unless I finish my work.
I can't go to the party unless I finish my work.

FORM unless if...not

USE “**Unless**” often has a similar to “**if... not**”:
Theo will play tennis on Sunday unless it rains.
Theo will play tennis on Sunday if it does not rain.

Only “if...not” is used with main clauses that are contrary to a present situation:
She would have a lot of money if she did not spend so much on clothes.
(She does not have a lot of money.)

“If it weren’t (hadn’t been) for” is also used with main clauses contrary to present
If it weren't for my high school math teacher, I wouldn't have become a teacher myself. (I did become a teacher.)

FORM even though even if

USE “**Even though**” and “**even if**” are used for emphasis.

Even though means “in spite of the fact that”. The condition after *even though* is real.
I went for a walk in the park even though it was very cold. (It was cold, but I walked.)

Even if means “whether or not”. The condition after **even if** may or may not be real.

I will walk to school even if it is very cold. (I will walk whether it is cold or not).

****“Even if”** can be replaced with **“even when”** with past tense and habitual present.

Fill in the blanks with IF, ONLY IF or UNLESS.

1. I can stay out late _____ my parents know where I am and who I'm with.
2. _____ you are free on Saturday morning, let's go out for breakfast.
3. My mother said I could have dessert _____ I finished eating my broccoli.
4. You can't stay home from school _____ you are really sick.
5. Generally you can't enter university _____ you graduate from high school.
6. You can do a Master's Degree _____ you earn a Bachelor's Degree first.

Complete the following with conditional clauses using UNLESS or IF...NOT.

1. I would not be so happy _____.
2. She could have been seriously hurt _____.
3. If it weren't for _____, _____.
4. My parents will take a vacation next summer _____.
5. We won't eat in a restaurant _____.
6. Steve couldn't have bought that car _____.

Complete with EVEN IF or EVEN THOUGH.

1. John is wealthy, but he looks for sales _____ he can afford to pay full price.
2. I rode by bike to school today _____ it was raining.
3. _____ my kids don't like broccoli, I give it to them because it's healthy.
4. Jim walks to school _____ he lives on the other side of the town.
5. Ken is always smiling and friendly, _____ he's having a bad day.
6. I wouldn't talk to him _____ he were the last person on earth.