

More about Conditionals

1-If only

This adds emphasis to hypothetical situations. With past events it adds a sense of regret. The second part of the sentence is often left out. Remember wish clauses!!!

If only I had enough time! = I wish I had enough time!

If only I hadn't drunk too much, this wouldn't have happened!

2-Unless and other alternatives to if

Unless means only if not. Not all the negative if sentences can be transformed into unless sentences.

If he wasn't told by Jane, he couldn't have known.

Unless he was told by Jane, he couldn't have known. (can be changed)

If Mr. Smith doesn't come back, he'll phone you. (cannot be changed)

If one situation depends on another, if can be replaced by **as/ so long as, provided or only if.**

You will be able to answer all these questions, **providing** you think a little.

I'll be able to lend you the money, **as long as** I get my salary next week.

I'll do what you say **provided** the police are not informed.

Even if describes how something will happen whatever the condition.

Even if it rains, we'll still go for a picnic. (if it rains or not, we will go for a picnic.)

3- Past events with results in the present: **The past perfect + would** (remember mixed conditionals)

If Jim **hadn't missed** the plane, he **would** be there by now.

4- Colloquial past situations

This is technically 'incorrect' but many native speakers say this, perhaps to balance the 'have' in each part of the sentence.

If I'd **have been** there, I **would have seen** her.

5- Going to

Going to replace *will*.

If you fall, you're **going to** hurt yourself.

It can also be used to mean 'intend to' after *if*.

If you're **going to** make trouble, we'll call the police.

6- Present perfect

This can be used to emphasize completion after *if*.

If you've **finished**, then we'll go.

It is also possible in both parts of the sentence.

If I've **told** you once, I've **told** you a hundred times!

7- Doubt and uncertainty

An additional '**not**' can be added in formal expressions involving doubt. This emphasizes the uncertainty and does not add a negative meaning.

*I wouldn't be surprised if it **didn't** rain.* (I think it will rain.)

8- **Should**

After *if*, this makes the possibility of the event seem unlikely.

*If you **should** see Ann, could you ask her to call me?*

This implies that I do not expect you to see Ann.

9- **Were to**

This also makes an event seem more hypothetical.

If I **were to** ask you to marry me, what would you say?

10- **Happen to**

This emphasizes chance possibilities. It is often used with *should*.

If you **happen to** see Helen, could you ask her to call me?

If you **should happen to** be passing, drop in for a cup of tea.

11- **If it were not for / If it hadn't been for**

This describes how one event depends on another.

If it weren't for Jim, this company would be in a mess.

If it hadn't been for their goalkeeper, Galatasaray would have lost.

12- **Will and would: politeness and emphasis**

These can be used as polite forms.

If you **will / would** wait here, I'll see if Mrs. Green is free.

Will also can be used for emphasis, meaning 'insist on doing'.

If you **will** stay out late, no wonder you are tired! (insist on staying)

13- **Supposing, otherwise**

Supposing or **suppose** can replace *if*, mainly in everyday speech.

Supposing you won the football pools, what would you do?

Supposing Peter married Jenny, how would you feel about it?

Otherwise means 'or if not'. It can be at the beginning or at the end of the sentence.

If you hadn't given us directions, we wouldn't have found the house.

Thanks for your directions to the house. We wouldn't have found it **otherwise**.

14- **But for**

This can replace *if not*. It is used in formal language, and must be followed by a noun form.

If you hadn't helped us, we would have been in trouble.

But for your help, we would have been in trouble.

If Bogdan hadn't helped me, I would certainly have failed in the exam.

But for Bogdan's help, I would certainly have failed in the exam.

15- **If so / If not**

This can refer to a sentence understood but not stated.

There is a possibility that Jack will be late. **If so**, I will take his place.

16- **Colloquial omission of if**

An imperative can be used instead of an *if* clause in everyday speech.

Sit down, and I'll make us a cup of tea. (If you sit down....)

17- **If and adjectives**

In expressions such as *if it is necessary / possible* it is possible to omit the verb *be*.

If interested, apply within one week.

If necessary, take a taxi.

18- **Formally if can mean although, usually as if + adjective.**

The room was well-furnished, if a little badly decorated.

Inverted Conditional sentences without if

Three types of If-sentence can be inverted without If-. This makes the sentences more formal and makes the event less likely.

If they were to escape, there would be an outcry.

Were they to escape, there would be an outcry.

If the police had found out, I would have been in trouble.

Were the police to have found out, I would have been in trouble.

If you should hear anything, let me know.

Should you hear anything, let me know.

If he has cheated he will have to be punished.

Should he have cheated, he will have to be punished.

If I had known, I would have protested strongly.

Had I known, I would have protested strongly.

If I had been more patient, I would have reached my goal.

Had I been more patient, I would have reached my goal.

Exercises

1- Which part is correct 'a' or 'b'?

a) If should you leave early b) should you leave early, could you give me a lift?

2- Rewrite each sentence, keeping the meaning same.

a)-If I had realized what would happen, I wouldn't have accepted the job.

Had

b)- If you do happen to see Helen, could you ask her to call me?

Should

c)-Were Smith to resign, I might stand a chance of getting the job.

If

d)-They would have discovered land sooner had they carried a compass.

If.....

e)- If I had studied harder, I would probably have passed all my exams.

Had

f)- If we were to offer her the job, we couldn't be sure that she would accept.

Were

Conditional with Modal Verbs

There are some special conditional forms for modal verbs in English:

would have + can = could have

would have + shall = should have

would have + may = might have

The words "can," "shall" and "may" must be used in these special forms; they cannot be used with "would have."

EXAMPLES:

If I had gone to Egypt, I could have learned Arabic. **CORRECT**

If she had had time, she might have gone to the party. **CORRECT**

IMPORTANT Only use "If"

Only the word "if" is used with the Past Unreal Conditional because you are discussing imaginary situations. "When" cannot be used.

EXAMPLES:

I would have bought that computer when it had been cheaper. **NOT CORRECT**

I would have bought that computer if it had been cheaper. **CORRECT**

IMPORTANT If / When

Both "if" and "when" are used in the Future Real Conditional, but the use is different from other real conditionals. In the Future Real Conditional, "if" suggests that you do not know if something will happen or not. "When" suggests that something will definitely happen at some point; we are simply waiting for it to occur. Notice also that the Simple Future is not used in "if" clauses or "when" clauses.

EXAMPLES:

When you **call** me, I will give you the address.

(You are going to call me later, and at that time, I will give you the address.)

If you **call** me, I will give you the address.

(If you want the address, you can call me.)

IMPORTANT Only use "If"

Only the word "if" is used with the Past Unreal Conditional because you are discussing imaginary situations. "When" cannot be used.

EXAMPLES:

I would buy that computer tomorrow when it were cheaper. **NOT CORRECT**

I would buy that computer tomorrow if it were cheaper. **CORRECT**