Grammar – Zero Conditional

If + present simple + present simple

We use the zero conditional to talk about facts or situations which are always true.
If/When/Unless plus a present form PLUS present simple or imperative

- If he gets there before me, ask him to wait.
- When you fly budget airline, you have to pay for your drinks and snacks.
- Unless you need more space, a small car is big enough for one person.
Note that we are not talking about a specific event but something which is generally true.

In the condition clause, we can use a variety of present forms. In the result clause, there can only be the present simple or imperative.
- If you visit London, go on the London Eye.
- If unemployment is rising, people tend to stay in their present jobs.
- If you've done that, go and have a coffee.
- When you go on holiday, take plenty of sun cream. It'll be very hot.
- When I'm concentrating, please don't make so much noise.
- When I've finished an article, I always ask Kate to read it through.

Notice that 'unless' means the same as 'if not'.
- Unless he asks you politely, refuse to do any more work on the project.
- Unless prices are rising, it's not a good investment.
Unless you've been there yourself, you don't really understand how fantastic it is

Grammar – First Conditional

If + present simple + will

We use the First Conditional to talk about future events that are likely to happen.
- If we take John, he'll be really pleased.
- If you give me some money, I'll pay you back tomorrow.
- If they tell us they want it, we'll have to give it to them.
- If Mary comes, she'll want to drive.

The 'if' clause can be used with different present forms.
- If I go to New York again, I'll buy you a souvenir from the Empire State Building.
- If he's feeling better, he'll come.
- If she hasn't heard the bad news yet, I'll tell her.

The "future clause" can contain 'going to' or the future perfect as well as 'will'.
- If I see him, I'm going to tell him exactly how angry I am.
- If we don't get the contract, we'll have wasted a lot of time and money.

The "future clause" can also contain other modal verbs such as 'can' and 'must'.
- If you go to New York, you must have the cheesecake in Lindy's.
If he comes, you can get a lift home with him.

Grammar – second conditional

> **If + past simple + would**

The Second Conditional is used to talk about 'impossible' situations.
• If we were in London today, we would be able to go to the concert in Hyde Park.
• If I had a million dollars, I'd give a lot to charity.
• If there were no hungry people in this world, it would be a much better place.

Note that after I / he/ she /it we often use the subjunctive form 'were' and not 'was'. (Some people think that 'were' is the only 'correct' form but other people think 'was' is equally 'correct' .)
• If she were happy in her job, she wouldn't be looking for another one.
• If I lived in Japan, I'd have sushi every day.
• If they were to enter our market, we'd have big problems.

Note the form 'If I were you' which is often used to give advice.
• If I were you, I'd look for a new place to live.
• If I were you, I'd go back to school and get more qualifications.

The Second Conditional is also used to talk about 'unlikely' situations.
• If I went to China, I'd visit the Great Wall.
• If I was the President, I'd reduce taxes.
• If you were in my position, you'd understand.

Note that the choice between the first and the second conditional is often a question of the speaker's attitude rather than of facts. Compare these examples. Otto thinks these things are possible, Peter doesn't.
• Otto – If I win the lottery, I'll buy a big house.
• Peter – If I won the lottery, I'd buy a big house.
• Otto – If I get promoted, I'll throw a big party.
• Peter – If I got promoted, I'd throw a big party.
• Otto – If my team win the Cup, I'll buy champagne for everybody.
• Peter – If my team won the Cup, I'd buy champagne for everybody.

Note that the 'If clause' can contain the past simple or the past continuous.
• If I was still working in Brighton, I would commute by train.
• If she were coming, she would be here by now.
• If they were thinking of selling, I would want to buy.

Note that the main clause can contain 'would' 'could' or 'might.
• If I had the chance to do it again, I would do it differently.
• If we met up for lunch, we could go to that new restaurant.
• If I spoke to him directly, I might be able to persuade him.

Also note that sometimes the 'if clause' is implied rather than spoken.
• What would I do without you? ("if you weren't here")
• Where would I get one at this time of night? ("if I wanted one")
He wouldn't agree. ("if I asked him")

Grammar – third conditional

If + past perfect simple + would + have + p/p

We can use the Third Conditional to talk about 'impossible' conditions, impossible because they are in the past and we cannot change what has happened.

- If I had worked harder at school, I would have got better grades.
- If I had had time, I would have gone to see him. But I didn't have time.
- If we had bought that house, we would have had to rebuild the kitchen.
- If we had caught the earlier train, we would have got there on time but we were late.

Notice that the main clause can contain 'would', 'could' or 'might.

- If I had seen him at the meeting, I would have asked him. (But he wasn't there so I didn't.)
- If I had seen him at the meeting, I could have asked him. (But he wasn't there so it wasn't possible.)
- If I had seen him at the meeting, I might have asked him. (But I'm not sure. Perhaps if the opportunity had arisen.)
- If I had paid more attention in class, I would have understood the lesson.

Also notice that sometimes the 'if clause' is implied rather than spoken.

- I'd have done it. ("if you had asked me but you didn't.")
- I wouldn't have said that. ("if I'd been there.")
He wouldn't have let him get away with that. ("if he had tried that with me.")

Conditionals / If Clauses Exercise 1

(Intermediate level)

Fill in the correct forms of the verbs in brackets, according to the type of the if-sentence shown at the end!

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(1) = first conditional / (2) = second conditional / (3) = third conditional

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1. If he _____ (eat) everything he _____ (be) ill. (3)
2. The police _____ (arrest) him if they _____ (catch) him (1)
3. What _____ (happen) if my parachute _____ (not open)? (1)
4. I _____ (be) angry if he _____ (make) more mistakes. (2)
5. If he _____ (not be) late we _____ (go) without him (3).
6. if I _____ (lend) you 10 pounds, _____ (you, give) it back to me? (1)
7. If you _____ (not like) this one, I_____ (bring) you another one. (1)
8. If I _____ (know) that I _____ (visit) you. (3)
9. I _____ (not drink) that wine if I _____ (be) you. (2)
10. If we _____ (have) more rain our crops _____ (grow) faster (3)
11. If you _____ (paint) the walls white the room _____ (be) much brighter (1).
12. I _____ (can repair) the roof myself if I _____ (have) a ladder (3).
13. You _____ (not have) so many accidents if you _____ (drive) slower (2).
14. What _____ (you, do) if you _____ (hear) the alarm? (2)
15. If you _____ (go) to Paris where _____ (you stay) ? (1)
16. I _____ (bring) you something to drink if I _____ (know) you were thirsty (2).
17. If anyone _____ (attack) me, my dog _____ (jump) at him (3).
18. if everybody _____ (give) me 3 pounds we _____ (have) enough. (1)

Conditionals / If Clauses Exercise 2

(Advanced level)

Put the verbs in brackets into their correct forms.

1. I would have read the letter if I _____ (know) it was from you.
2. If Tony doesn't help in the garden I _____ (not finish) my work in time.
3. If you _____ (not tell) me about Maxwell's birthday I would forget it.
4. We _____ (catch) the train earlier if Mary had found her purse.
5. If Susan _____ (learn) the poem she would have known the answer.
6. If it _____ (be) too hot, we will stop and get a cold drink.
7. If it _____ (not rain) today I would stay it home.
8. If the Professor spoke clearly, we _____ (understand) him better.
9. If you go on talking like that,we _____ (throw) you out.
10. If Sasha _____ (go) home now he would meet his own brother.
11. If it rained, the streets _____ (be) wet.
12. If I _____ (not tell), Jim the address he wouldn't have found you.
13. The bird _____ (die) if you had caught it.
14. What _____ (you, do) if you won the lottery?
15. If the weather _____ (not change) we will reach the top of the mountain.
16. Dinner _____ (be) fine if the meat weren't cold.
17. I'm sure Benny _____ (come) if you wait a bit longer.
18. If you ring the bell, somebody _____ (answer) it.
19. If Bert _____ (see) you, he would have talked to you.
20. You _____ (find) your ticket if you had looked into your pockets.
21. You _____ (fall) ill if you eat so much.
22. What _____ (happen) if the door had not been opened?
23. If Chris asked you for a cigarette, _____ (you, give) him one?
24. If you _____ (buy) that big car, you would need a lot of money.
25. _____ (You, change) the colour of your hair if I asked you to do so?
26. If you give me the letter, I _____ (post) it for you.
27. _____ (You, post) the letter if I had given it to you?
28. If the weather is fine, I _____ (go) swimming.
29. If you_____ (not work) harder, you won't pass the exam.
30. If they _____ (be) rich, they would travel around the world.
31. The children _____ (go) skating if the lake were frozen.
32. What would you have done, if you _____ (lose) your handbag?
33. What will happen if you _____ (not know) the answer?
34. She _____ (go) on holiday, if she hadn't been ill.
35. If I _____ (notice) you, I would have said hello.
36. If I _____ (be) like you, I wouldn't watch such films.
37. If you opened your eyes, you_____ (see) a wonderful world.
38. People _____ (live) in peace if they stop fighting.
39. If Tom drinks so much, he _____ (cannot drive) home.
40. If we _____ (not hurry) we would miss the train.

Answer Key Exercise 1

1. If he had eaten (eat) everything he would have been (be) ill. (3)

2. The police will arrest (arrest) him if they catch (catch) him (1)

3. What will happen (happen) if my parachute doesn't open (not open)? (1)

4. I would be (be) angry if he made (make) more mistakes. (2)

5. If he hadn't been (not be) late we would have gone (go) without him (3).

6. If I lend (lend) you 10 pounds, will you give (you, give) it back to me? (1)

7. If you don't like (not like) this one, I will bring (bring) you another one. (1)

8. If I had known (know) that I would have visited (visit) you. (3)

9. I would not drink (not drink) that wine if I was /were (be) you. (2)

10. If we had had (have) more rain our crops would have grown (grow) faster (3)

11. If you paint (paint) the walls white the room will be (be) much brighter (1).

12. I would have been able to repair (can repair) the roof myself if I had had (have) a ladder. (3)
13. You wouldn't have (not have) so many accidents if you drove (drive) slower (2).

14. What would you do (you, do) if you heard (hear) the alarm? (2)

15. If you go (go) to Paris where will you stay/are you staying/ will you be staying (you stay)? (1)

16. I would bring (bring) you something to drink if I knew (know) you were thirsty (2).

17. If anyone had attacked (attack) me, my dog would have jumped (jump) at him (3).

18. If everybody gives (give) me 3 pounds we will have (have) enough. (1)

Answer Key Exercise 2

1. I would have read the letter if I had known (know) it was from you.
2. If Tony doesn't help in the garden I will not finish (not finish) my work in time.
3. If you didn't tell (not tell) me about Maxwell's birthday I would forget it.
4. We would have caught (catch) the train earlier if Mary had found her purse.
5. If Susan had learned (learn) the poem she would have known the answer.
6. If it isn't (be) too hot, we will stop and get a cold drink.
7. If it didn't rain (not rain) today I would stay it home.
8. If the Professor spoke clearly, we would understand (understand) him better.
9. If you go on talking like that we will throw (throw) you out.
10. If Sasha went (go) home now he would meet his own brother.
11. If it rained, the streets would be (be) wet.
12. If I had not told (not tell) Jim the address he wouldn't have found you.
13. The bird would have died (die) if you had caught it.
14. What would you do (you, do) if you won the lottery?
15. If the weather doesn't change (not change) we will reach the top of the mountain.
16. Dinner would be (be) fine if the meat weren't cold.
17. I'm sure Benny will come (come) if you wait a bit longer.
18. If you ring the bell, somebody will answer (answer) it.
19. If Bert had seen (see) you, he would have talked to you.
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24. If you bought (buy) that big car, you would need a lot of money.
25. Would you change (You, change) the colour of your hair if I asked you to do so?
26. If you give me the letter, I will post (post) it for you.
27. Would you have posted (You, post) the letter if I had given it to you?
28. If the weather is fine, I will go (go) swimming.
29. If you don't work (not work) harder, you won't pass the exam.
30. If they were (be) rich, they would travel around the world.
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32. What would you have done, if you had lost (lose) your handbag?
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34. She would have gone (go) on holiday, if she hadn't been ill.
35. If I had noticed (notice) you, I would have said hello.
36. If I were (be) like you, I wouldn't watch such films.
37. If you opened your eyes, you would see (see) a wonderful world.
38. People will live (live) in peace if they stop fighting.
39. If Tom drinks so much, he won't be able drive (cannot drive) home.
40. If we didn't hurry (not hurry) we would miss the train.