

Conditional sentences (type 1, 2 and 3)

CEFR B1-B2 · 20 questions · A4 / US Letter

If plus the right verb pattern: real, unreal and impossible situations, with the comma rule.

The rule

The shape of a conditional

- If-clause first: "If it rains, we will stay home." Use a comma between the two parts.
- Main clause first: "We will stay home if it rains." No comma before "if".
- The if-clause never takes will, would or had in the standard patterns. Will and would live in the main clause.
- Unless means if not: "Unless you hurry, we will miss the train."

Zero conditional: facts and habits

- Pattern: if + present simple, present simple.
- Use it for things that are always true or always happen.
- "If you heat water to 100 degrees, it boils."
- "If I drink coffee after six, I cannot sleep."

First conditional: a real future possibility

- Pattern: if + present simple, will + base verb.
- The condition is possible and the result is in the future.
- "If the bus arrives on time, we will catch the 9 o'clock train."
- Use can, may or going to in the main clause when they fit better: "If you finish early, you can go home."

Second conditional: imaginary present or future

- Pattern: if + past simple, would + base verb.
- The condition is not true now, or is very unlikely.
- "If I had more time, I would learn the piano." (I do not have more time.)
- With the verb be, use were for every person in careful English: "If I were you, I would apologise."
- The past form here does not mean past time. It creates distance from reality.

Third conditional: the impossible past

- Pattern: if + had + past participle, would have + past participle.
- We imagine a different past and its result. Both parts are past.
- "If she had left earlier, she would have caught the train." (She did not leave earlier, and she missed it.)
- Mixed conditionals exist: "If I had studied medicine, I would be a doctor now" (past condition, present result).

Questions

Write your answer on the line under each question. Check your work with the answer key on the last page.

1. If it ___ tomorrow, we will cancel the picnic.

2. If I ___ you, I would apologise.

3. If she had taken the earlier train, she ___ on time.

4. If you heat ice, it ___.

5. I would travel more if I ___ more money.

6. We will be late ___ we leave now.

7. If I had known about the meeting, I ___ my plans.

8. If you finish your homework early, you ___ watch a film.

9. Please call me if you ___ late.

10. If I ___ the answer, I would tell you.

11. She would have passed the exam if she ___.

12. If I eat too much sugar, I ___ bad.

13. If it ___ colder, it would snow.

14. Unless you ___ the form, we cannot process the application.

15. If they had left at dawn, they ___ the storm.

16. If I ___ his number, I would call him right now.

17. You will burn the rice ___ you turn down the heat.

18. If I ___ younger, I would study abroad.

19. He said he would come if he ___ time.

20. If the weather ___ nice tomorrow, we will walk to the beach.

Answer key

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1. **rains** — The first conditional uses the present simple in the if-clause: if it rains.
2. **were** — The second conditional uses were for every person in careful English: If I were you.
3. **would have arrived** — Third conditional: if + had + participle, would have + participle.
4. **melts** — Zero conditional for a general fact: if + present, present.
5. **had** — Second conditional: the past simple "had" shows that reality is different. I do not have enough money.
6. **unless** — Unless means if we do not. "We will be late unless we leave now" is the correct pattern.
7. **would have changed** — The if-clause is in the past, so the result uses would have changed.
8. **can** — Can fits a real present or future opportunity in a first conditional main clause.
9. **are** — A real future possibility takes the present simple in the if-clause: if you are late.
10. **knew** — Second conditional, imaginary present: if I knew. I do not know the answer.
11. **had studied** — Third conditional if-clause: if + had + past participle.
12. **feel** — Zero conditional for a personal habit: if + present, present.
13. **were** — The second conditional uses the past subjunctive were, even with "it". The present reality is that it is not cold enough.
14. **sign** — Unless already means if you do not, so the verb stays positive: unless you sign.
15. **would have missed** — Third conditional result: would have plus the past participle, missed.
16. **had** — Imaginary present with a present result: if I had his number, I would call him. The past form "had" shows I do not have it.
17. **unless** — Unless means if you do not. The sentence needs the negative meaning that unless provides.
18. **were** — Second conditional: were marks an unreal present. I am not younger now.
19. **had** — After a past reporting verb, the second conditional shifts back: he would come if he had time.
20. **is** — First conditional with a real future possibility: if the weather is nice.