

If clauses

First conditional/if clause type 1

If I see her, I will ask her.

If clauses

First conditional/
If clause type 1

The first conditional describes something that is either expected or likely to happen (a real condition) and what will, can or might happen as a consequence of this.

If it rains tomorrow, you will need an umbrella.

The first conditional is made up of a conditional clause (*if* + present simple) and a main clause with the (expected) result of that condition (modal verb *will/won't* + infinitive without *to*).

If you catch the 3 o'clock bus, you will be in time.

The main clause with the result can also use the modal verbs *can* or *might* instead of *will*.

If I leave early, I can meet you for a drink before dinner.

If it does not rain, we might sit outside for a drink.

If clauses type 1
consider likely
developments
in the future.

Note:

If the if clause is the first element of the sentence, both parts of the sentence are separated by a comma.

If it rains tomorrow (comma), you will need an umbrella.

There is no comma if the main clause is the first element.

You will need an umbrella (no comma) if it rains tomorrow.

This rule applies to all
types of if clauses.

1. Halbjahr 2026
Englisch Grammar Refresher for You B1-B2
261-40660, Do, 17.00 – 18.00 Uhr

Exercises

Complete the sentences with the correct format of either the if- or main clause:

1. If it (to rain) tomorrow, I (to bring) my umbrella.
*If it **rains** tomorrow, I **will bring** my umbrella.*
2. If she (to call) me, I will answer the phone.
*If she **calls** me, I will answer the phone.*
3. You will be late for school if you (not, to hurry).
*You will be late for school if you **don't hurry**.*

Translate:

4. Wir machen eine Fahrradtour, wenn die Sonne morgen scheint.
We will make a bicycle tour if the sun shines tomorrow.
5. Wenn du später Zeit hast, können wir einen Kaffee trinken.
If you have time later, we can have a coffee.
6. Er wird nicht kommen, wenn du ihn nicht einlädst.
He won't come if you don't invite him.
7. Wenn der Bus nicht kommt, könnten wir laufen.
If the bus does not come, we might/could walk.

If clauses

Second conditional/if clause type 2

If I had enough money, I would buy a new car.

If clauses

Second conditional/ If clause type 2

The second conditional describes imaginary situations (unreal conditions) and results of these conditions that could be possible (despite the fact that the results are based on unreal conditions).

The conditional clause is made with *if* + the past simple and the main clause is made with *would/wouldn't* + the infinitive of the verb without *to*.

If I won the lottery, I would travel around the world.

If clauses type 2 consider suggested developments in the present tense.

When the predicate of the conditional clause is formed with *to be* in the first or third person singular (*I, he, she, it*), we use *were/weren't* in formal English (*if she were more polite, ..., If I were taller, ...*) and *was/wasn't* in less formal English (*if she was more polite, ..., if I was taller, ...*). We always use *were/weren't* for the second person singular or plural.

We can use the second conditional to give advice.

If I were you, I would leave.

Modals

Could and *might* can be used in the main clause instead of *would*.

If I had more time, I could write that book.

If she studied harder, she might get better grades.

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Exercises

Complete the sentences with the correct format of the if- and/or main clause:

1. If I (to have) more money, I (to buy) a new car.
*If I **had** more money, I **would buy** a new car.*
2. If it (not, to rain), we could go for a walk..
*If it **wasn't raining**, we could go for a walk.*
3. He would be healthier if he (not, to eat) so much junk food.
*He would be healthier if he **didn't eat** so much junk food.*

Translate:

4. An deiner Stelle würde ich nach Hause gehen.
If I were you, I would go home.
5. Wenn sie morgen nicht arbeiten müsste, könnte sie mit uns zu Abend essen.
*If she **didn't have to work tomorrow**, she could join us for dinner.*
6. Du könntest dich mit José unterhalten, wenn du Spanisch sprechen würdest.
You could converse with José if you spoke Spanish.
7. Wenn du kein Auto hättest, müsstest du laufen.
*If you **didn't have a car**, you would have to walk.*

If clauses

Third conditional/if clause type 3

If I had studied harder, I would have passed the exam.

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If clauses

Third conditional/
If clause type 3

The third conditional describes a condition in the past which was not fulfilled and an imaginary result. The condition is unreal and can no longer happen, so sentences in the third conditional imagine the past being different from what it really was.

It is made up of a conditional clause with *if* + the past perfect and a main clause with *would/wouldn't have* + the past participle.

If the train hadn't been late, I would have arrived in time.

Delete *if*

The if clause can be built without using *if* (no change of meaning):

Had the train not been late, I would have arrived in time.

Modals

Could and *might* can be used in the main clause instead of *would*.

If I had got up earlier, I might/could have caught the bus.

If clauses type 3
consider unreal
developments in the
past and their
imaginary results.

We can use the third conditional to express regret or happiness about things in the past.

If I had fixed the leaky roof sooner, there would not have been so much damage. (regret)

If I hadn't seen this presentation, I would not have become a happy user of the third conditional. (happiness)

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Exercises

Complete the sentences with the correct format of the if- and/or main clause:

1. They (to listen) to the weather forecast, they wouldn't have been caught in the rain.
Had they listened to the weather forecast, they would not have been caught in the rain.

2. If I hadn't missed the bus, I (not to be) late.
*If I hadn't missed the bus, I **would not have been** late.*

3. He (not, to have) such a hangover if he hadn't drunk so much alcohol.
*He **would not have had** such a hangover if he hadn't drunk so much alcohol.*

Translate:

4. Wenn ich härter gearbeitet hätte, hätte ich mehr Geld verdient.
If I had worked harder, I would have made more money.

5. Wir hätten das Konzert mehr genießen können, wenn es nicht so voll gewesen wäre.
We could have enjoyed the concert better if it hadn't been so crowded.

6. Wenn sie früher gegangen wären, hätten sie den Flug nicht verpasst.
Had they left/if they had left earlier, they would not have missed the flight.

7. Hätte ich das gewusst, wäre ich früher gegangen.
Had I known this/if I had known this, I would have left earlier.

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Mixed conditionals

In mixed conditional sentences we combine parts of two different conditionals.

We can combine the second and third conditional to talk about an unreal condition in the past and its imaginary effect on the present and future.

Third conditional

*If I had never met him,
I would be so much happier.*

Second conditional

Rare

We can also combine the second and third conditional to talk about an unreal condition in the past/present and its imaginary result in the past:

Second conditional

*If I took better care of the my teeth,
I wouldn't have got all this cavities*

Third conditional

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Exercise

Complete the chat with the correct form of the verbs in brackets

*Hey Luke! I have exciting news. I'll tell you more tonight,
but ...if my boss decides to take early retirement,
I may (to get) a promotion.*

What? That's fantastic!

*It isn't official yet. But if it is true what I keep hearing through
the grapevine, I (to have) a good chance.*

*If you got the promotion,
you (to get) a raise as well, wouldn't you?*

Yes!

*I'm so proud of you. After all, if you hadn't worked hard,
they (not, to consider) you for this position.*