

CONDITIONALS

zero conditional

If you want to be fit, **you have to** do exercise every day.
If your muscles **ache** every day, **you are** probably **doing** too much exercise.
If you **haven't been** to London, you **haven't lived**.

- To talk about something which is always true or always happens as a result of something else, use *if* + present simple, and the present simple in the other clause.
- You can also use the present continuous or present perfect in either clause.

first conditional

If the photos **are** good, I'll **send** them to you.
If you're **not going**, I'm **not going to go** either.
If I **haven't come back** by 9.00, **start** dinner without me.
I'll **have finished** in an hour **if** you **don't** disturb me.

- You can use any present tense in the *if* clause (present simple, continuous or perfect) and any future form (*will*, *going to*, future perfect, future continuous) or an imperative in the other clause.

future time clauses

I'll be ready **as soon as** I've **had** a shower.
We'll probably be watching the Cup Final **when** you **arrive**.
We're not going to go out **until** the rain **has stopped**.
I'm not going to work overtime **unless** I **get** paid.
Take your umbrella **in case** it **rains**.

- When you are talking about the future, use a present tense after time expressions, e.g. *as soon as*, *when*, *until*, *unless*, *before*, *after*, and *in case*. This can be any present tense, e.g. present simple, present continuous, present perfect.
- We use *in case* when we do something in order to be ready for future situations / problems. Compare the use of *if* and *in case*:
I'll take a jacket if it's cold. = I won't take one if it's not cold.
I'll take a jacket in case it's cold. = I'll take a jacket anyway because it might be cold.

unreal conditionals

second conditional sentences: *if* + past simple, *would* / *wouldn't* + infinitive

- 1 **If** there **was** a fire in this hotel, it **would be** very difficult to escape.
I **wouldn't live** in the country **if** I **didn't have** a car.
- 2 **If** you **weren't making** so much noise, I **could concentrate** better.
- 3 **If** I **were** you, I'd **make** Jimmy wear a helmet when he's cycling.

- 1 Use second conditional sentences to talk about hypothetical or improbable situations in the present / future.
- 2 In the *if* clause you can also use the past continuous. In the other clause you can use *could* or *might* instead of *would*, e.g. *If you weren't making so much noise, I could concentrate better.*
- 3 With the verb *be* you can use *was* or *were* for *I*, *he*, and *she* in the *if* clause, e.g. *If he was / were here, he would know what to do.* However, in conditionals beginning *If I were you...* to give advice, always use *were*.

third conditional sentences: *if* + past perfect, *would* / *wouldn't have* + past participle

- 1 **If** you **had studied** more, you **would have done** better in the exams.
I **wouldn't have been** late **if** I **hadn't overslept**.
- 2 He **would have died** **if** he **hadn't been wearing** a helmet.
If they **had known** you were coming, they **might have stayed** longer.

- 1 We use third conditional sentences to talk about a hypothetical past situation and its consequence.
- 2 You can also use the past perfect continuous in the *if* clause. You can use *could have* or *might have* instead of *would have* in the other clause.

second or third conditional?

- 1 If you **studied** more, you **would** probably **pass** the exam.
- 2 If you **had studied** more, you **would** probably **have passed** the exam.

- Compare the two conditionals. 1 = You don't study enough. You need to study more. 2 = You didn't study enough, so you failed.

⚠ We sometimes mix second and third conditionals if a hypothetical situation in the past has a present / future consequence, e.g. *He wouldn't be so relaxed if he hadn't finished his exams.*