

Conditional Sentences

We use a conditional sentence to express a factual or an imaginary situation in the past, present, or future as the consequence of another related situation. While using conditional sentences, we include a connector- if or unless. These conditional sentences are mainly complex sentences. In a conditional sentence, an independent clause is followed by a subordinate or dependent clause with the inclusion of a connector (if or unless). There are four types of conditional sentences.

1. Zero Conditional Sentences
2. First Conditional Sentences
3. Second Conditional Sentences
4. Third Conditional Sentences

Zero Conditional Sentences

A zero conditional sentence is used to express a general or factual situation that is always caused by another related situation.

Structure: Subordinate Clause (If + Present Tense) + Independent Clause (Present Tense)

Examples:

- **If** you heat water to 100 degrees Celsius, it boils.
- **If** you heat ice, it melts.

First Conditional Sentences

A first conditional sentence is used to talk about a future hypothetical situation on the basis of another related situation in the present.

Structure: Subordinate Clause (If+ Present Tense) + Independent Clause (Future Tense)

Examples:

- **If** you remain lazy, you will suffer in the long run.
- **If** we take a balanced diet, you will be physically well.

- **Unless** you are united, you cannot be successful.
- **If** we cut trees at random, one day our country will turn into a desert.

Second Conditional Sentences

A second conditional sentence is used to express a hypothetical or imagery situation which would happen on the basis of a situation in the past.

Structure: Subordinate Clause (If + Past Indefinite) + Independent Clause (Sub + would/ could/ might + Base form of the Main Verb)

Examples:

- **If** I reached late, I would miss an important meeting.
- I would be present there, **if** he told me.
- **If** I had much money, I would help the poor.

Third Conditional Sentences

A third conditional sentence is used to express a hypothetical or imagery situation which would have happened if something had happened.

Structure: Subordinate Clause (If + Past Perfect Tense) + Independent Clause (Sub + would/ could/ might + have + Past Participle of the main Verb).

Examples:

- **If** she had informed me, I would have done something for her.
- Had he been careful, he would have been safe.
- Had I seen him before, I would have helped him.