

First Conditional

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Grammar Notes

FIRST CONDITIONAL

A. Introduction to Conditionals

Conditionals are used to express a *hypothetical* situation. This is when you don't know if something will happen or not, so you make a guess about what the result might be. There are four conditional patterns in the English language, and they usually involve an "if" clause. This lesson will focus on the **first conditional**, also known as the **real conditional**.

B. The First Conditional

Pattern: If + present, will + base verb

Use: The first conditional shows a **likely** or **possible** outcome that will probably happen if a certain condition is met.

Tip #1

The verb in the *if clause* is a **simple present** verb, and the verb in the *main clause* is **will + the base form** of the verb. A sentence can begin with either clause with no change in meaning. Remember that a sentence that begins with an *if clause* is followed by a comma.

- **If it's sunny tomorrow**, they will go to the beach.
- **They will go to the beach** if it's sunny tomorrow.

Examples			
Sentences	Condition	Outcome	Explanation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I study for the test, I will get a good grade. • I will get a good grade if I study for the test. 	studying	good grade	Studying makes it likely that I will get a good grade on the test.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Mr. Smith has a second cup of coffee, he will probably be late for work. • Mr. Smith will probably be late for work if he has a second cup of coffee. 	second cup of coffee	late for work	Having another cup of coffee makes it possible that Mr. Smith will be late.



Grammar Notes cont.

B. The First Conditional cont.

Examples cont.			
Sentences	Condition	Outcome	Explanation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they rehearse a lot, they'll be ready for their concert next weekend. • They'll be ready for their concert next weekend if they rehearse a lot. 	rehearsing	ready for concert	Rehearsing makes it likely that they will be ready to play at their upcoming concert.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If she doesn't buy a new suit, she won't have anything to wear to the interview. • She won't have anything to wear to the interview if she doesn't buy a new suit. 	new suit	something to wear to the interview	Not buying a new suit means she won't have an appropriate interview outfit.

Tip #2

It is possible to have a **negative** verb in the *if clause*, the main clause, or both. The contraction of *will not* is *won't*.

- If I **don't pass** this test, my parents will be very angry.
- If I forget to water the plants, they **won't survive**.
- If I'm **not** late for work again, I **won't have** to look for another job.

Tip #3

The verb in the *if clause* will end in **-s** if the subject is third person singular.

- If she **watches** that sad movie, she will cry.
- She will cry if she **watches** that sad movie.

Tip #4

Though not as common, it is possible to use **be going to + base verb** or the **present progressive** (which are the two other ways of forming the simple future in English) in place of *will + base verb* with no change in meaning.

For example, these sentences all have the same meaning:

- If it doesn't rain, we **will go** for a walk. (will + V)
- If it doesn't rain, we **are going to go** for a walk. (be going to + V)
- If it doesn't rain, we **are going** for a walk. (be + -ing V)

Exercise 1

MULTIPLE-CHOICE

Circle the best answer.

Ex. My mother will be angry if
I _____ late for school again.

- a) be
- b) is
- c) am

1. If she goes to the birthday party on Sunday, she _____ a present.
 - a) takes
 - b) will take
 - c) take
2. I _____ the doctor if my stomach still hurts tomorrow.
 - a) will call
 - b) called
 - c) call
3. She will do the exercise again if she _____ a lot of mistakes.
 - a) will make
 - b) makes
 - c) make
4. If they practice a lot, they _____ the game next weekend.
 - a) wins
 - b) win
 - c) will win
5. I will take my umbrella if it _____ tomorrow.
 - a) rains
 - b) raining
 - c) will rain
6. She will marry him if he _____ her.
 - a) will ask
 - b) ask
 - c) asks
7. If we go out tonight, we _____ the door.
 - a) will lock
 - b) locks
 - c) lock
8. I will make a sandwich if I _____ hungry.
 - a) is
 - b) will be
 - c) am

Exercise 3

MATCHING

Match the first part of the sentence on the left with the most logical ending on the right. Each choice can only be used once.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p><u> h </u> 1. If you eat too much candy...</p> <p><u> </u> 2. If you don't study...</p> <p><u> </u> 3. You will have bad dreams...</p> <p><u> </u> 4. If you eat lots of vegetables...</p> <p><u> </u> 5. You will burn yourself...</p> <p><u> </u> 6. If you are late for school...</p> <p><u> </u> 7. If you practice the piano every night...</p> <p><u> </u> 8. If you don't finish your dinner...</p> <p><u> </u> 9. If you behave nicely...</p> <p><u> </u> 10. I will pay you ten dollars...</p> | <p>a) if you babysit your little sister tonight.</p> <p>b) the teacher will keep you in after class.</p> <p>c) I won't let you have any dessert.</p> <p>d) I will buy you a treat.</p> <p>e) you will be healthy.</p> <p>f) you will play beautifully.</p> <p>g) you will fail your exam.</p> <p>h) your teeth will hurt.</p> <p>i) if you watch a scary movie before bed.</p> <p>j) if you play with matches.</p> |
|---|--|

Exercise 4

COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

Complete the following sentences using your own words.

Ex. You won't feel good if *you eat that entire pizza.* _____

1. If you don't water the plants, _____
2. If you wash your wool clothes in hot water, _____
3. If you eat too many sweets, _____
4. If you don't wear sunscreen, _____
5. I will read you a bedtime story if _____
6. You will be punished if _____
7. If you drive too fast, _____
8. You'll be tired in the morning if _____

Exercise 5

NEGATIVE SENTENCES

Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verb provided.

- Ex. We won't play tennis tomorrow if it rains.
(not/play) (rain)
1. She _____ the children play in the house if they _____ too much noise.
(let) (not/make)
 2. If we _____, we _____ our plane.
(not/hurry) (miss)
 3. The bee _____ you if you _____.
(not/sting) (not/move)
 4. If you _____ more loudly, no one _____ you.
(not/speak) (hear)
 5. We _____ late if we _____ the car.
(be) (not/take)
 6. If it _____ hot tomorrow, we _____ to the beach.
(not/be) (not/go)
 7. If you _____ your umbrella, you _____ wet.
(not/take) (get)
 8. You _____ your test if you _____ harder.
(not/pass) (not/study)
 9. If he _____ a job soon, she _____ him.
(not/find) (not/marry)
 10. They _____ you if you _____ you're sorry.
(not/forgive) (not/say)
 11. The bank _____ you money if you _____ a good job.
(not/lend) (not/have)
 12. If you _____ your room, your mother _____ you go to the movie tonight.
(not/clean) (not/let)
 13. If you _____ smoking, you _____ sick.
(not/quit) (get)
 14. You _____ to sleep if you _____ that horror movie.
(not/be able) (watch)
 15. If you _____ your alarm clock, you _____ up on time.
(not/set) (not/wake)
 16. You _____ if you _____.
(not/improve) (not/practice)

Exercise 6

SCRAMBLED SENTENCES

A. Main Clause + If Clause

Put the words in the correct order to make conditional sentences. Start each sentence with the main clause.

Ex. works will she hard boss give a the raise if her

The boss will give her a raise if she works hard.

1. we if is cancel the bad will the weather game

2. she car if will doesn't take the start bus her

3. I am your will if come to I not party busy

4. if will umbrella it take rains I an

B. If Clause + Main Clause

Put the words in the correct order to make conditional sentences. Start each sentence with the if clause.

Ex. works will she hard boss give a the raise if her

If she works hard, the boss will give her a raise.

1. if put will in fridge you the go don't milk the it sour

2. garden don't plants if grow the water the won't you

3. next beach go the sunny we if weekend it's will to

4. we if sold concert too out long wait the be will

Exercise 7

SUPERSTITIONS

Many cultures have similar superstitions. For example:

- If you break a mirror, you will have seven years of bad luck.
- If you pull out a gray hair, ten more will grow in its place.

A. Matching

Work with a partner or in small groups. Read the first part of the superstitions and try to match them with the correct endings. If you have never heard of these superstitions, use your imagination and have fun!

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>_____ 1. If you step on a crack,</p> <p>_____ 2. If your right eye twitches,</p> <p>_____ 3. If the bottom of your foot itches,</p> <p>_____ 4. If you blow out all the candles on your birthday cake in one blow,</p> <p>_____ 5. If the palm of your left hand itches,</p> <p>_____ 6. If you are a bridesmaid three times,</p> <p>_____ 7. If a bee enters your house,</p> <p>_____ 8. If you say goodbye to a friend on a bridge,</p> <p>_____ 9. If you see a swarm of bees on your roof,</p> <p>_____ 10. If your nose itches,</p> <p>_____ 11. If you eat an apple every day,</p> <p>_____ 12. If you cut an apple in half and count how many seeds are inside,</p> | <p>a) you will have to pay someone a lot of money.</p> <p>b) you will soon be kissed by a fool.</p> <p>c) your house will burn down.</p> <p>d) there will soon be a birth in your family.</p> <p>e) you will never marry.</p> <p>f) it will keep the doctor away.</p> <p>g) your wish will come true.</p> <p>h) you will know how many children you will have.</p> <p>i) you will soon have a visitor.</p> <p>j) you will break your mother's back.</p> <p>k) you will never see each other again.</p> <p>l) you will take a trip soon.</p> |
|---|---|

B. Writing

Write three superstitions from your own culture using the first conditional.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Exercise 8

SURVEY

Work in small groups. Complete the chart below by asking three of your classmates the following questions. Answer using the first conditional.

#	Question			
1	If you go to a restaurant this weekend, what will you order?			
2	If the teacher gives a lot of homework tonight, will you have time to finish it?			
3	If the weather is beautiful on the weekend, what will you do?			
4	If you catch a bad cold this week, what will you do/take for it?			
5	If you go to a movie this weekend, what will you see?			
6	If you watch TV tonight, what will you watch?			
7	If you take a trip soon, where will you go?			
8	If you buy a new boat, what color will it be?			
9	If you have dessert tonight, what will you have?			
10	If you visit a friend this week, who will it be?			

Exercise 9

QUIZ

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. If you _____ carefully, you'll know what to do.
 - a) will think
 - b) think
 - c) thinks
2. If she goes out tonight, she _____ it tomorrow morning.
 - a) regret
 - b) regrets
 - c) will regret
3. I will send you a postcard if you _____ me your address.
 - a) give
 - b) gives
 - c) will give
4. My brother will miss his appointment if he _____ late.
 - a) will be
 - b) are
 - c) is
5. If he _____ a pizza, he will eat the whole thing.
 - a) orders
 - b) will order
 - c) order
6. They _____ out for dinner if there is no food in the house.
 - a) will go
 - b) goes
 - c) go
7. If the weather is bad, we _____ the picnic.
 - a) cancel
 - b) will cancel
 - c) cancels
8. If I _____ late, my parents will be angry.
 - a) will be
 - b) am
 - c) is
9. My coworkers _____ the report today if they finish it.
 - a) hands in
 - b) hand in
 - c) will hand in
10. If that painting is still for sale, we _____ it.
 - a) buy
 - b) will buy
 - c) buys
11. If their grandmother _____ , they will sing a song to her.
 - a) call
 - b) will call
 - c) calls
12. My manager _____ about the meeting if I don't remind her.
 - a) forgets
 - b) forget
 - c) will forget

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students learn and practice the first conditional through writing and speaking activities. They will try a sentence matchup task that will get them moving and a cultural activity on superstitions.

LEVEL: Int

TIME: 2–3 hours

TAGS: conditional, first conditional, real conditional, mood, if, present, will, verbs, sentence patterns, grammar

Exercise 1

- | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| 1. b | 3. b | 5. a | 7. a |
| 2. a | 4. c | 6. c | 8. c |

Exercise 2

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. sleeps in, will miss | 8. feels, will call |
| 2. misses, will be | 9. calls, will ask |
| 3. is, will be | 10. goes, will drink |
| 4. is, will fire | 11. drinks, will need |
| 5. loses, will get | 12. needs, will have to |
| 6. gets, will break up | 13. stays, will get |
| 7. breaks up, will be | 14. gets, will go |

Exercise 3

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. h | 3. i | 5. j | 7. f | 9. d |
| 2. g | 4. e | 6. b | 8. c | 10. a |

Exercise 4

Answers will vary. Here are some samples:

- If you don't water the plants, they will die.
- If you wash your wool clothes in hot water, they will shrink.
- If you eat too many sweets, you will get a stomachache.
- If you don't wear sunscreen, you will get a sunburn.
- I will read you a bedtime story if you get into your pajamas quickly.
- You will be punished if you behave badly.
- If you drive too fast, you will get a speeding ticket.
- You'll be tired in the morning if you stay up late again.

Exercise 5

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. will let, don't make | 10. won't forgive, don't say |
| 2. don't hurry, will miss | 11. won't lend, don't have |
| 3. won't sting, don't move | 12. don't clean, won't let |
| 4. don't speak, will hear | 13. don't quit, will get |
| 5. will be, don't take | 14. won't be able, watch |
| 6. isn't, won't go | 15. don't set, won't wake |
| 7. don't take, will get | 16. won't improve,
don't practice |
| 8. won't pass, don't study | |
| 9. doesn't find, won't marry | |

Exercise 6

A. MAIN CLAUSE + IF CLAUSE

- We will cancel the game if the weather is bad.
- She will take the bus if her car doesn't start.
- I will come to your party if I am not busy.
- I will take an umbrella if it rains.

B. IF CLAUSE + MAIN CLAUSE

- The milk will go sour if you don't put it in the fridge.
- If you don't water the plants, the garden won't grow.
- If it's sunny next weekend, we will go to the beach. / If it's sunny, we will go to the beach next weekend.
- If we wait too long, the concert will be sold out.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Exercise 7

A. MATCHING

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. j | 3. l | 5. a | 7. i | 9. c | 11. f |
| 2. d | 4. g | 6. e | 8. k | 10. b | 12. h |

B. WRITING

Answers will vary. Here are some samples:

- If a black cat crosses your path, you will have bad luck.
- If you find a four-leaf clover, you will have good luck.
- If you walk under a ladder, you will have bad luck.

Exercise 8

Answers will vary.

Exercise 9

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. b | 3. a | 5. a | 7. b | 9. c | 11. c |
| 2. c | 4. c | 6. a | 8. b | 10. b | 12. c |

Extra Practice I

On page 14, you will find a page of strips to cut up. Cut the *if* and *main* clauses into strips and give one clause to each student. Have the students search the room for the matching clause to complete the sentence (note that there is more than one possibility in some cases—you can accept any logical, reasonable match). As an alternative task, give each pair or group a set of mixed-up strips and have them arrange all the strips into the correct order. These tasks would work well as a warm-up to this lesson or for review later on.

Extra Practice II

On page 15, you will find a comparison chart with all four conditional tenses. Comparing all the conditional tenses at once can be helpful for students to see when and why each is used. If you think your students can handle it, present the chart before or after the First Conditional lesson. You can find more help and practice on our blog (<http://blog.esllibrary.com/2013/03/14/an-easy-way-to-teach-conditionals/>) and in our Grammar Practice Worksheets section (<https://esllibrary.com/courses/88/lessons>). In that section, you'll find our lessons on the Second and Third Conditional.

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Gray*, *Color*, and *Practice*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Grey*, *Colour*, and *Practise* (when used as a verb, *Practice* when used as a noun). Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.

Extra Practice I

SENTENCE STRIPS

If I set my alarm,	I won't sleep in.
If she gains more weight,	she'll go on a diet.
If they aren't more careful,	they'll have an accident.
If they have a baby girl,	they will name her Maria.
If the police catch the robber,	they will take him to jail.
If he has a toothache,	he'll go to the dentist.
If I have a headache,	I'll take some aspirin.
If he starts to lose his hair,	he'll buy a wig.
If our power goes out,	we'll light some candles.
If my car isn't fixed,	I'll have to take the bus.
If you don't wear a coat,	you might catch a cold.
If there isn't any snow,	we won't be able to go skiing.
If he's late for work again,	his boss will fire him.
If we don't hurry,	we'll miss our bus.
If they don't have enough money for the car,	they'll borrow some from the bank.
If you don't pay attention in class,	you won't understand the lesson.
If the floor is wet,	you might slip.
If you aren't satisfied with your purchase,	the store will give you your money back.
If I send the parcel by airmail,	it will arrive much faster.

Extra Practice II

CONDITIONAL COMPARISON CHART

Name	Form	Time	Function	Example
Zero Conditional	If + present, present	Present	Use this conditional to show an outcome that happens if a specific repeated condition is met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If he takes vitamins every day, he doesn't get sick. He doesn't get sick if he takes vitamins every day.
First Conditional (Real Conditional)	If + present, will + verb	Present/ Future	Use this conditional to show a likely or possible outcome that will probably happen if a specific condition is met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If she studies for the test, she will get a good grade. She will get a good grade if she studies for the test.
Second Conditional (Unreal Conditional)	If + past, would + verb	Present/ Future	Use this conditional to show an unlikely or impossible outcome that probably wouldn't happen (unless a specific condition were met).	<p>Unlikely situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If he won the lottery, he would quit his job. He would quit his job if he won the lottery. <p>Impossible situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If I had wings, I would fly to Antarctica. I would fly to Antarctica if I had wings.
Third Conditional	If + had + p.p., would + have + p.p.	Past	Use this conditional to show a past regret or different outcome that would have happened if a specific condition had been met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If I had remembered to call my friend last night, she wouldn't have sent me an angry text message. My friend wouldn't have sent me an angry text message if I had remembered to call her last night.