



# Conditionals



Zero  
Conditional

First  
Conditional

Second  
Conditional

Third  
Conditional

# Common features

- All statements contain the word “IF”
- All have two parts:
  - 1.) the condition part (contains “If” or “When”)
  - 2.) the result part
- The condition part has an effect on the result part
- The order of the sentence can change
- Examples:
  - If you eat a lot (the condition part), you get fat. (the result part)
  - If I won the lottery (condition part), I would buy a big house. (result part)

# Zero Conditional

For things that are 100% TRUE

General/scientific truths → If ice melts, it becomes water.

Facts → If you cut your finger, you bleed.

Habits → If I order tea, I ask for milk and sugar.

# The way you form a zero conditional sentence

IF/WHEN + Present Simple (S + V), Present Simple (S + V)

Examples:

If (When) people eat too much, they get fat.

If (When) I don't study, I fail the exams.

# First Conditional

Used for possible situations in the future →  
If you leave now, you won't be late.

First (REAL) Conditional → we use it when there is a high probability that something will happen IN THE FUTURE if a certain condition is fulfilled.

# The way you form a first conditional sentence

IF + Present Simple (S+V), Future Simple (S + WILL/WON'T + V)

Examples:

If you leave now, you won't be late.

If you study a lot, you will pass the exam.

# Second Conditional

Used to express unreal/imaginary situations or actions that are impossible and probably not going to happen. The situation is hypothetical.

You can use WERE for all subjects (I were, You were, He/She/It were...)

# The way you form a second conditional sentence

IF + PAST SIMPLE (S+V2/-ed,-d), S + WOULD + V

Examples:

If I won the lottery, I would buy a big house. (I probably won't win the lottery, but I imagine what would happen if I won it)

If I were you, I'd(=would) buy a new car. (I can't be you, but I imagine that if I were in your situation, what I would do)

# Third Conditional

Used when we talk about situations or actions that did not happen or happened in another way IN THE PAST

We just imagine the situation that would have happened if something had happened in another way

If he had studied harder, he would have passed the exam.  
(but we know he didn't study hard and he didn't pass the exam → we just imagine what could have happened)

# The way you form a third conditional sentence

IF + PAST PERFECT (S+HAD+V3), S + WOULD (WOULDN'T) HAVE + V3

Examples:

If I had won the lottery, I would have bought a Ferrari. (but I did not win the lottery and I didn't buy a Ferrari either → I just imagine what would have happened if I had won the lottery)

If I hadn't eaten so much, I wouldn't have felt sick (but I did eat a lot, and I felt sick. → I just imagine what would have happened if I hadn't eaten so much)

# Modal Verbs

(Be) able to

Can

Can't

Could

Don't have to

Don't need to

Have to

May

Might

Must

Mustn't

Need

Shall

Should

Will

Would

# Common features

They are all auxiliaries  
(helping verbs)

Give additional  
information about  
the main verb

Never change their  
form

Always followed by  
the BASE form of the  
verb (MODAL + V)

Allow speakers to  
express: certainty,  
possibility, willingness,  
obligation, necessity,  
ability

# SHALL

It is used to make suggestions, offers or ask for advice  
(in the present or in the future)

Used only in questions with first person singular or plural →  
only with I and WE

Example:

Shall I call her on the phone? Shall we go to the disco this weekend?

Form: SHALL + I / WE + V....?

# SHOULD

It is used to give advice, suggestions or to express (mild – not so strong) obligation in the present or in the future

Example: You should visit your grandparents more often!  
We should go to the meeting.

Form: S + should + V

# SHOULDN'T (SHOULD NOT)

We use it to make criticisms (about something we think is wrong or unacceptable) - You shouldn't talk to her like that!

To give a negative advice or (mild – not so strong) obligation - Students shouldn't use cell phones during a class.

Form: S + shouldn't + V

# CAN / COULD / BE ABLE TO

## CAN

It is used to express a general ability and possibility in the present or in the future

Example:  
I can ride a bike.  
(general ability)

Can you meet me at 5?  
(future possibility)

## COULD

It is used to talk about past abilities and refers to a less certain possibility.

Example:  
He could do handstands when he was 10. (past ability)

I could meet you at 5, but I'm not sure. (less certain possibility)

## BE ABLE TO

Synonym of can, but it expresses a specific (managed to do) ability.

***S + be able to + V***

Present: S + am/is/are able to + V

Past: S + was/were able to + V

Future: S + will be able to + V

# CAN / WILL vs COULD / WOULD

## CAN / WILL

Asking for permission,  
requesting action in a more  
impolite way

Example:

Can I borrow your pen?  
Can(Will) you lend me 100  
dollars?

## COULD / WOULD

It is used to ask for  
permission and request an  
action in a more polite way

Example:

Could I borrow your pen?  
Could (would) you lend me  
100 dollars?

# MAY vs MIGHT

## MAY

To ask for a permission in a polite way (similarly to could)  
Example: May I use your phone?

To speculate about the future and the present → suggests that something is possible, more likely to happen

Example: It may rain tomorrow. → there is a great chance that it will rain tomorrow, because the weather is bad nowadays

## MIGHT

To speculate about the future and the present → suggests a weaker possibility, less likely to happen.

Example: It might rain tomorrow. → although there is a chance, but there is only a little chance that it will rain tomorrow, because the weather is not that bad nowadays.

# MUST vs HAVE TO

## MUST

Expresses a personal obligation. What the speaker thinks is necessary. The obligation is the opinion of the speaker

Example: I must stop smoking. He must work harder.

Only used to express obligation in the present or in the future, cannot use must in the past (have to)

## HAVE TO

Expresses an impersonal obligation. When the subject is obliged or forced to do something by an external power (Law or school rules)

Used in all tenses:  
Present: S + HAVE/HAS TO + V  
Past: S + HAD TO + V  
Future: S + WILL HAVE TO + V

Example: In France, you have to drive on the right.

# MUSTN'T vs DON'T HAVE TO

## MUSTN'T

Expresses prohibition → something that is not permitted, not allowed. It can be either subjective or objective.

Example: I mustn't eat so much sugar. (subjective) Policemen must not drink on duty. (objective)

Used in the present and the future tenses. Not used for the past.

## DON'T HAVE TO

Expresses the absence of obligation or necessity.

Example: You don't have to drive. (You are not obliged to drive → but you can if you want to.)

Don't need to works the same.