

Conditional sentences

Use

Conditional sentences are used to describe situations which are true in certain circumstances or under certain conditions.

They are made up of two clauses. One clause usually has *if* at the beginning. The *if* clause can be in first or second position

Form

General truths (zero conditional)

Things that are always true.

Present simple	if	Present simple
<i>Water boils</i>		<i>you heat it above 100 degrees.</i>
<i>You can't drive alone</i>		<i>you don't pass your driving test.</i>

Possible and probable conditions

things that are very likely to happen.

Present simple	if	Present simple
<i>We'll catch the train</i>		<i>we hurry.</i>
<i>The dentist won't see you</i>		<i>you don't have an appointment.</i>

Possible but improbable conditions

for things which might happen, but probably won't.

Would (do)	if	Past simple
<i>I'd move to Hollywood</i>		<i>I had enough money. (but that's not likely to happen)</i>
<i>She'd be more relaxed</i>		<i>she didn't work so hard. (but she always works too hard)</i>

Impossible conditions

situations which are in the past and therefore no longer possible.

Would have (done)	if	Past perfect
<i>I'd (would) have gone to the concert</i>		<i>I had heard about it in time. It's now too late.</i>
<i>You'd have got a better seat</i>		<i>you'd left earlier.</i>