First and second conditional

Lesson code: DL7B-7EAB-8RR8-H  INTERMEDIATE +

1 Presentation

When we talk about possible or hypothetical situations with If ..., we can use a first conditional or second conditional structure. Study the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Examples and use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First conditional</td>
<td>According to the weather forecast, it might rain tonight. We use the first conditional when there is a real possibility that something will happen in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I do ..., I’ll (= I will) ...</td>
<td>If it rains, I’ll stay at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If I don’t call you tonight, you can call me. Will you wait for me if I am late?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instead of will, we can use other modal verbs, e.g. can, might, may, must, should.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second conditional</td>
<td>At the moment, it’s raining. We use the second conditional when we imagine a situation or when there is very little or no possibility that something will happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I did ..., I’d (= I would) ...</td>
<td>If it was sunny, I’d go out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What would you do if you found a lot of money in the street? If it wasn’t dark outside, we could go out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instead of would, we can use could or might.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Things to remember

- We do not use will or would in the if-part of a conditional sentence:
  
  If it will rain, I’ll stay at home.

- The if-part of the sentence can go at the beginning or at the end:
  
  If it rains, I’ll stay at home. I’ll stay at home if it rains.

- In the second conditional we use if + past (if I did, if I didn’t, etc.), but the meaning is not past. In this type of structure, the past tense refers to an imaginary or hypothetical situation, such as finding a lot of money in the street:
  
  What would you do if you found a lot of money in the street?

- In a first conditional sentence, we can use when instead of if for things that we are sure will happen:
  
  When she comes, I’ll call you.
First and second conditional

**2 Practice 1**

Put the verb in the correct form to complete each sentence.

1. If global warming continues, temperatures **will rise** (rise) even higher.
2. What would you do if you **win** (win) a million dollars?
3. If people stopped using cars completely, there **be** (be) much less pollution.
4. When it **rain** (rain) again, I won’t forget to bring my umbrella.
5. If I spoke English fluently, I **not/need** (not/need) to take lessons.
6. If Siberia **not/be** (not/be) so cold, I’d go there in winter.
7. Tom will be at the party tonight. If I see him, I **say** (say) hello.
8. If it **not/rain** (not/rain) so much in England, you wouldn’t see so many umbrellas.
9. If Siberia **not/be** (not/be) so cold, I’d go there in winter.
10. Where **you/live** (you/live) when you move out of your flat?
11. If you **can** (can) choose any company, which company would you like to work for?

**3 Practice 2**

Study each situation and complete the sentence below. Decide whether to use a first or second conditional structure.

1. According to the weather forecast there is a chance of snow tomorrow.
   If it **snow**, I **need** (need) to buy a pair of gloves.
2. Patrick is deciding whether to go to France or Spain on his next holiday.
   If Patrick **go** (go) to Spain, he **be** (be) very satisfied.
3. John works 12 hours a day.
   If John **not/be** (not/be) so busy, he **have** (have) more time for his family.
4. Kate is out of work, but she goes shopping every day.
   If Kate **continue** (continue) to go shopping, she **run out** (run out) of money.
5. It is a sunny day with clear blue skies.
   If it **rain**, I **need** (need) an umbrella.
6. Anne’s boss is very demanding.
   If Anne’s boss **not/be** (not/be) so demanding, she **not/be** (not/be) so stressed.
7. Daniel has an exam tomorrow.
   If Daniel **pass** (pass) his exam, he **celebrate** (celebrate) with his friends.
8. Fabio and Carlo are best friends.
   If Fabio and Carlo **not/be** (not/be) best friends, they probably **not/be** (not/be) living together.
9. Derek doesn’t have a car. It takes him an hour to get to work.
   If Derek **not/have** (not/have) a car, it **not/take** (not/take) him so long to get to work.
10. The Olympic Games are held every four years.
    If the Olympics **be** (be) held every year, they **not/be** (not/be) so interesting.

You can review this worksheet online at www.linguahouse.com/ex

Review your flashcards at least 3-5 times a week for 20 minutes to keep the material fresh in your memory.
4 Practice 3

Look at the situations below. Decide if they are impossible/hypothetical or possible and form a conditional sentence for each one. Where possible, try to use other modal verbs instead of will or would, for example can, could, might, may, should, must. Examples:

If it rains this weekend, I may not go out.
If I had a holiday next week, I might go to Portugal.

It will rain this weekend.
You will have a holiday next week.
You speak English fluently.
You will win the lottery.
Your country will win the football World Cup.
You will go out tonight with some friends.
You live in another country.
You can fly.
You will meet the president of your country.
You will be late for your next lesson.
You will go to bed later than usual tonight.
# First and second conditional - Key

## 2 Practice 1

2. won  
3. would be  
4. rains  
5. wouldn’t need  
6. wasn’t  
7. ’ll say  
8. didn’t rain  
9. ’ll call  
10. will you live  
11. could

## 3 Practice 2

1. snows; ’ll need  
2. goes; ’ll be  
3. wasn’t; ’d have  
4. continues; ’ll run out  
5. was raining; would need  
6. wasn’t; wouldn’t be  
7. passes; ’ll celebrate  
8. weren’t; wouldn’t be  
9. had; wouldn’t take  
10. were; wouldn’t be

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