

All conditional types – table

	use	if clause (condition)	,	main clause (result)
Type 0	to talk about things that are always true or that normally happen	<p><u>present (simple, continuous, perfect)</u></p> <p>If something happens ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 If the food <i>is</i> out of date ... 2 If I've <i>drunk</i> ... 3 If you <i>are talking</i> ... 	,	<p><u>present (simple, continuous, perfect)</u></p> <p>... the result is true.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ... I <i>don't eat</i> it. 2 ... I <i>don't drive</i>. 3 ... I <i>can't concentrate</i>.
Type 1	to talk about a probable event happening in the future	<p><u>present (simple, continuous, perfect)</u></p> <p>If something happens ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 If you <i>study</i> ... 2 If he <i>doesn't call</i> you ... 3 If you've <i>come</i> to class ... 4 If we <i>win</i> ... 	,	<p><u>future, imperative, can, must, might, may</u></p> <p>... the result will be true.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ... you <i>will pass</i> the exam. 2 ... <i>tell me</i> immediately. 3 ... the exam <i>is going to be</i> easy. 4 ... <i>we'll be celebrating</i> soon.
Type 2	to talk about present or future hypothetical or unreal situations	<p><u>past (simple, continuous)</u></p> <p>If something happened ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 If I <i>won</i> the lottery ... 2 If you <i>weren't talking</i> ... 3 If I <i>were</i> you ... 	,	<p><u>would/could/might + infinitive</u></p> <p>... the result would be true.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ... I <i>would buy</i> a yacht. 2 ... I <i>could concentrate</i>. 3 ... I <i>might wait</i> before taking a decision.
Type 3	to talk about past hypothetical or unreal situations	<p><u>past perfect (simple, continuous)</u></p> <p>If something had happened ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 If you <i>had come</i> to class ... 2 If he <i>hadn't been wearing</i> a helmet... 	,	<p><u>would/could/might + have + past participle</u></p> <p>... the result would have been true.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ... you <i>would have passed</i> the exam. 2 ... he <i>could have died</i>.
Mixed conditionals	to talk about a past hypothetical or unreal situation with a present result	<p><u>past perfect (simple, continuous)</u></p> <p>If something had happened ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 If I <i>had won</i> the lottery ... 2 If I <i>hadn't been wearing</i> a helmet... 	,	<p><u>would/could/might + infinitive</u></p> <p>... the result would be true.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ... now I <i>would be</i> rich. 2 ... I <i>might be</i> dead now.
	to talk about a present hypothetical or unreal situation with a past result	<p><u>past (simple, continuous)</u></p> <p>If something happened ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 If I <i>spoke</i> German more fluently ... 2 If I <i>wasn't</i> a woman ... 	,	<p><u>would/could/might + have + past participle</u></p> <p>... the result would have been true.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ... I <i>might not have had</i> such problems. 2 ... They <i>would have given</i> me the job.

Mixed conditionals

We use mixed conditionals if we want to mix talking about the present and the past in the same sentence. The mixed conditional is a combination of the **second and the third conditional**:

⇒ We can use past simple or continuous in the **if**-clause (to refer to the present or future), and **would/should/might have + past participle** in the main clause (to refer to the past).

⇒ We can also use past perfect in the **if**-clause (to refer to the past), and **would/should/might + infinitive** (to refer to the present).

- If I **didn't have** (second conditional) *so much work*, I **would have gone** (third conditional) *to the party last night*.
- If I **spoke** (second conditional) *German*, I **would have understood** (third conditional) *them*.
- If I **had won** (third conditional) *the lottery*, I **would be** (second conditional) *rich*.
- If I **hadn't dropped** (third conditional) *school*, I **could have** (second conditional) *a better job now*.

Alternatives to if in conditional sentences

As long as / provided (that) / providing (that) / on condition (that) / only if

We can use the expressions **as long as**, **provided/providing (that)**, **on condition (that)**, or **only if** instead of **if** when we want to emphasize the condition that needs to be present so that something can happen or be done.

- I'll tell you what really happened **as long as** you keep the secret.
- I'll lend you the money **provided (that)** you pay me back next month.
- They will speak to the press **on condition (that)** they remain anonymous sources.
- We will invest the money, but **only if** you can prove that it's a safe investment.

Whether or not

We use **whether or not** when there are two alternatives and we want to say that something will happen or will be true in any of those two alternatives. Compare:

- I'll help him **if** he needs me. (=I will help him only if he needs me.)
- I'll help him **whether or not** he needs me. (I will help him if he needs me, and I will help him if he doesn't need me, too.)

Even if

We also use **even if** with a similar meaning to 'whether or not'. It is used to emphasize that something will still be true or will happen if another thing happens.

- **Even if** you apologise, he'll never forgive you. (=Whether or not you apologise, he'll never forgive you.)

Suppose/supposing

We normally use **suppose** or **supposing** at the beginning of a sentence to make someone imagine a situation. It means 'what would happen if', or simply 'if' (imagining a situation).

- **Supposing** *I got a job, I wouldn't be able to travel with you next summer.*
- **Suppose** *she doesn't believe you, what would you do then?*

Inversion in conditional sentences

Should you find

In **first conditional** sentences it's possible to use **should** at the beginning of the sentence instead of **if**. This form is formal and it's quite common with an imperative form in the main clause.

- **Should** *you find the answer, please let me know as soon as possible.* (=If you find the answer)
- **Should** *you change your mind, you know where to contact us.* (=If you change your mind)

Had we arrived

In **third conditional** sentences, we can invert the auxiliary verb **had** and leave **if** out. *Had we arrived* = If we had arrived.

- **Had we arrived** *earlier, we could have prevented the incident.*
- **Had they looked** *further into the data, they might have realised there was a mistake.*

Were we to announce

We can also find cases of inversion with this structure: **were** + subject + **to** + infinitive. It is used to talk about **future improbable events** (like the **second conditional**).

- **Were we to announce** *the truth, we would receive a lot of criticism.* (=If we announced ...)
- **Were they to buy** *a new house, they would need to sell the old one first.* (=If they bought ...)

Negative forms: **should I not, had we not, were we not**

When **should, had** or **were** are negative, contracted forms are not possible, and **not** is used after the subject.

- **Should you not wish** *to retake the test, you must let us know before the end of June.* (NOT ~~Shouldn't you wish~~)
- **Had you not refused** *my invitation, we would have had the most incredible time in our lives.* (NOT ~~Hadn't you refused~~)
- **Were you not** *my brother, I would call the police.* (NOT ~~Weren't you~~)