

## Conditional sentences

Conditional sentences have two or more clauses joined with *if*. We use them in two kinds of situations.

1 Normal situations where we use normal verb forms.

*If we **charge** for parking, more employees **will cycle** to work.*

*Life **is** more interesting **if** you **have** a lot of friends.*

*If it's **not** the right size, **bring** it back.*

*If you're **going to keep staring** at me and I'm **going to keep staring** back, we **should** introduce ourselves.*

See the notes below on first conditionals for more examples.

2 Imaginary or unreal situations where we don't use normal verb forms.

*If I **had** a problem, my friend **would support** me. (= imaginary because I don't have a problem)*

*If I **were** you, I'd **tell** the truth. (= unreal because I'm not you)*

See the notes on the right on second conditionals for more examples.

### Punctuation

The *if*-clause can be the first or the second part of the sentence. When it comes at the beginning, we usually put a comma between the two clauses.

*You'll feel better if you do some exercise.*

*If you do some exercise, you'll feel better.*

*I'd feel terrible if the girl fell.*

*If the girl fell, I'd feel terrible.*

## The first conditional and similar forms


### Use

We use the first conditional to talk about a possibility in the future. The *if*-clause contains the condition and the other clause contains the result.

*If you **take more exercise**, you'll **feel fitter**.*

*You'll **double the number of fish you catch** if you **buy another boat**.*

### Form

First conditional	
Use <i>if</i> + present simple, <i>will</i> / <i>won't</i> (do).	<i>If we only <b>have</b> one income, it'll <b>be</b> hard to survive.</i> <i>If the price <b>is</b> too high, she <b>won't</b> buy it.</i>
Similar conditionals	
Use <i>if</i> + verb forms that are normal for the situation.	<i>If you <b>work</b> harder, you <b>can</b> earn more money.</i> <i>If you <b>mix</b> blue with yellow, you <b>get</b> green.</i> <i>If it's <b>too expensive</b>, we <b>shouldn't</b> buy it.</i> <i>If employees <b>haven't</b> upgraded their skills, they <b>have to</b> go.</i>
<p> We cannot usually use <i>will</i> in the <i>if</i>-clause. Instead we use a present tense to express a future idea.</p> <p><i>If I <b>see</b> Peter, I'll tell him to call you.</i></p> <p>NOT <i>If I <b>will</b> see Peter, I'll tell him to call you.</i></p>	

## The second conditional

### Use

We use the second conditional to talk about imaginary or unreal situations.

*If I **had** six months paid holiday, I **would travel** round the world. (I don't have six months paid holiday.)*

### Form

Second conditional	
Use <i>if</i> + past simple, <i>would</i> / <i>wouldn't</i> (do).	<i>If we <b>didn't have</b> friends we <b>could</b> trust, the world <b>would be</b> a worse place.</i> <i>If I <b>was</b> rich, I <b>wouldn't</b> carry on working.</i>

1 In spoken English, *would* often contracts to 'd.

2 In formal English, we use *were* instead of *was* in all persons in the second conditional.

*If I **were** in your situation, I **would** resign.*

3 We can also use other modal verbs like *could* and *might* in second conditional sentences.

*If I **had** my boss's job, I **could** make some big changes.*

*If I **was** in that situation, I **might** lie to my boss.*

## The passive

### Use

We use the passive when we are more interested in the action than in the person who does it.

*Forty per cent of the budget **is spent** on marketing. (We are interested in how much is spent, not the person who spends it.)*

*The movie **was dubbed**. (We are interested in the movie, not who dubbed it.)*

We often use the passive when we don't know who did an action.

*My wallet **was stolen**. (I don't know who took it.)*

When we want to say who did an action, we use the preposition *by*.

*The Laff Box **was invented by** Charlie Douglass.*

Passives are more common in written than spoken English. They are also more common when we are writing or speaking in a formal style.

### Form

The passive	
<b>Affirmative sentences</b> Use <i>be</i> + past participle.	<i>Prizes <b>are given</b> to the most entertaining couple.</i> <i>The book <b>was written</b> by Jhumpa Lahiri.</i>
<b>Negative sentences</b> Use <i>be</i> + <i>not</i> + past participle.	<i>It <b>isn't</b> made of gold.</i> <i>The goods <b>weren't delivered</b> on time.</i>
<b>Questions</b> Change the word order.	<i><b>Are</b> everybody's seat belts <b>fastened</b>?</i> <i><b>Where was</b> the movie <b>shot</b>?</i>
<b>Short answers</b> Use <i>was/were</i> or <i>were/weren't</i> .	<i>Was it made in China?</i> <i><b>Yes, it was.</b> / <b>No, it wasn't.</b></i> <i>Were you offered the job?</i> <i><b>Yes, I was.</b> / <b>No, I wasn't.</b></i>