

## Conditionals

**If** sentences can be quite complicated. The **if** clause is typically first, but the order of the clauses can be reversed for a change in emphasis. The descriptions below are based around time and reality:

Timeless, universal, always true – 'zero' conditional (**if** + subject + present tense, subject + present tense): **If interest rates go up, the cost of borrowing normally increases.**

Future time, quite likely – First conditional (**if** + subject + present tense, subject + modal): **If she does well in the interview, she will/should/may get the job.** [paraphrase: 'on condition that she performs well in the interview, the chances of getting the job are reasonably good']

Future time, unlikely – Second conditional (**if** + subject + past tense, subject + **would**): **If she got the job I'd be amazed.** [paraphrase: 'it's possible, but I really don't think it's at all likely that she'll get the job']

Present time, unreal – Second conditional (**if** + subject + past tense, subject + **would**): **If we had the resources we would be able to help you.** [paraphrase: 'we don't have the resources so it's not possible to help you']

Past time, unreal – Third conditional (**if** + subject + past perfect, subject + **would have** past participle): **If I'd realized what a cowboy outfit this company was I would never have taken the job.** [paraphrase: 'this company is a cowboy outfit, but when I took the job I didn't realize this, so now I'm upset about it']

Past unreal event affecting real present time – mixed third and second conditional (**if** + subject + past perfect, subject + modal + infinitive): **If I had passed the exam I might/would be in a better job now.** [paraphrase: 'I failed the exam which means I'm now in a worse job']

Present unreal event, past real event – mixed second and third conditional (**if** + subject + past tense, subject + **would have** past participle): **If the company operated there, they would have been badly affected by last week's currency crash.** [paraphrase: 'the company doesn't operate there, so they haven't been affected by last week's currency crash']

4 Choose the most appropriate tense to complete the following sentences.

- I'd be surprised if he \_\_\_\_\_ (reach) his sales targets this year.
- If you \_\_\_\_\_ (ask) me there's no chance it'll happen.
- If you \_\_\_\_\_ (pass) by the office on your way out, could you tell Arne I'll be down in a minute?
- People who complain are generally happier if you \_\_\_\_\_ (sit down) and spend a bit of time listening to them.
- If only I \_\_\_\_\_ (know) about her problems I wouldn't have dismissed her so quickly.
- The report would be finished by now – if you \_\_\_\_\_ (leave) me in peace and \_\_\_\_\_ (give) me enough time to get on with it.

- If only I \_\_\_\_\_ (listen) to your advice, I wouldn't be in this mess now.
- Be thankful we're not in real estate – if we \_\_\_\_\_ (be) in the business of selling houses we \_\_\_\_\_ (hit) really badly by the recent property crash.
- There's no way the sales results would be so bad if we \_\_\_\_\_ (be) part of the team from the beginning.
- In my view, she would never have got so far if it \_\_\_\_\_ (be) for her family connections.

## Active and passive voice

Active: **They are constructing a new retail outlet.**

Passive: **A new retail outlet is being constructed.**

To form the passive voice use **be** as an auxiliary verb and keep the same tense and aspect, in this example the present continuous. The passive is used: to focus on one topic, **Oil is produced ... Oil is refined ... Then it is transported ...**; to make a text more formal or objective; when we do not know or want to avoid saying who did something, **Mistakes have regrettably been made**, or it is unnecessary, **The equipment should then be disconnected.**

The passive voice is more common in academic writing than other kinds of text, accounting for about 20% of verbs, but it is quite rare in conversation – just 2% of verbs.

4 Read the following text and decide whether the active or passive forms are the most appropriate.

### Employees and motivation

In recent years (1) *a great deal of research has been done / they have done a great deal of research* into motivation in the workplace. Yet misconceptions (2) *are persisted / persist*. Not only (3) *do many employees believe / is it believed by many employees* that money is the main source of motivation, but also that motivation must come from outside. This external, or extrinsic, motivation might be in the form of rewards for (4) *the achievement of a specific degree of success by employees / employees who have achieved a specific degree of success*. While (5) *such rewards may be wanted by employees / employees may want such rewards*, they might not be aware that a different kind of motivation is equally powerful. (6) *Intrinsic motivation plays a major role / A major role is played by intrinsic motivation* in getting workers on task and on the road to success. This kind of motivation comes from within and (7) *external rewards do not affect it / is not affected by external rewards*. Finally, employees (8) *can help themselves / can be helped by* individually drawing up a personalized plan involving self-motivational techniques.