

# First Conditional

The first conditional is used to express something that will possibly happen in the present or future. Unlike the zero conditional, which expresses conditions that are generally true (or scientifically proven), the first conditional conveys something that *might* happen if certain conditions are met.

In a first conditional sentence, the conditional clause can use a variety of present verb forms while the result clause must use the future form with 'going to', 'will' or the future perfect. As there is an element of uncertainty in the first conditional, the result clause can also use the modals 'may' or 'might'.

## **If/Unless clause (condition)**

If /Unless this thing happens

## **Main clause (result)**

that thing might happen.

In a first conditional sentence, the clauses are interchangeable but pay close attention to where the comma goes. Only use a comma if the conditional clause comes first.

If you work hard, you will succeed.

You will succeed if you work hard.

If we go to New York, we're going to visit the Statue of Liberty.

We're going to visit the Statue of Liberty if we go to New York.

If you arrive at Pearce Station, you'll have gone too far.

You'll have gone too far if you arrive at Pearce Station.

If it's a nice day, we might go to the beach.

We might go to the beach if it's a nice day.

Unless they meet the deadline, the manager will be furious.

The manager will be furious unless they meet the deadline.

**Exercise 1:** below are examples of different situations the first conditional might be used for. Show students the situations one by one and have them, in groups, brainstorm more examples following the rules for the first conditional.

**Sunny day:**

1. If it's a sunny day, we're going to go for a picnic.
2. We will stay home unless it's a sunny day.

(3 minutes to brainstorm more possibilities for a sunny day)

**Homework not done:**

1. If you don't do your homework, the teacher will punish you.
2. The teacher will get angry unless you do your homework.

(3 minutes to brainstorm more possibilities for homework not done)

**Go to London:**

1. If I go to London, I will go to an Arsenal game.
2. I might visit the London Eye if I go to London.

(3 minutes to brainstorm more possibilities going to London)

**Win the lottery:**

1. If I win the lottery, I will travel the world.
2. I will buy a Mercedes if I win the lottery.

(3 minutes to brainstorm more possibilities going to London)

We'll be late for the concert	I'll be our team's top scorer	You might lose weight	We'll go to the beach	Unless we hurry up
If I finish my homework on time	Unless it's raining tomorrow	I might buy a new iPad	I will get into university	I will watch the movie
If you do more exercise	My parents will be angry	She will forgive him	My boss will fire me	Unless I tidy my room
If I'm late for work one more time	If I pass this exam	If I score two goals today	If she loves him	If I save enough money this year

**Exercise 2:** print out and cut up a set of cards for each group and instruct them to match two clauses to make first conditional sentences.

As an extra activity, have each group work together to write the sentences accurately, focusing on the correct punctuation.

For higher level students or groups that finish quickly, have them write the other possible way each sentence could be written.

**Exercise 3:** correct the errors in the following zero conditional sentences.

1. If he went to the restaurant, he would have tried the steak.
2. If they go to the park they will have flown a kite.
3. They got a bonus if they met their deadline.
4. Unless she studied hard, she will not pass the exam.
5. If you stopped eating junk food, you will get fat.

**Exercise 4:** multiple choice – choose the correct alternative.

1. If you don't drive safely,
  - a. you might have an accident
  - b. you will have had an accident.
  
2. If we have time tonight,
  - a. we would have went to the cinema.
  - b. we will go to the cinema.
  
3. If you don't wear a coat,
  - a. you caught a cold.
  - b. you will catch a cold.

4. If we don't take a taxi

- a. we will be late.
- b. we were late.

5. If I have time,

- a. I will go to the party.
- b. I went to the party.

6. If you play with fire,

- a. you got burnt.
- b. you'll get burnt.

7. If you walk under a ladder,

- a. you had bad luck.
- b. you'll have bad luck.

8. If you don't remind me,

- a. I'll forget.
- b. I forget.

9. If they don't stop making noise,

- a. I call the police.
- b. I'll call the police.

10. If I have enough time,

- a. I'll tidy the room.
- b. will tidy the room.

**Exercise 5:** multiple choice – choose the correct verbs that fit the first conditional sentences below.

1. If they \_\_\_\_\_ to our house, I \_\_\_\_\_ dinner.

- a. came
- b. come
- c. might have cooked
- d. might cook

2. We \_\_\_\_\_ at home if it \_\_\_\_\_ tomorrow.

- a. stay
- b. will stay
- c. raining
- d. rains

3. Unless you \_\_\_\_\_ really hard, you \_\_\_\_\_ get a promotion.

- a. work
- b. works
- c. will
- d. won't

4. If you \_\_\_\_\_ this computer, you \_\_\_\_\_ a free mouse.

- a. buy
- b. bought
- c. get
- d. will get

5. If we \_\_\_\_\_ there on time, we \_\_\_\_\_ caught the bus.

a. got

c. will have

b. get

d. would have

6. If it \_\_\_\_\_ tomorrow, we \_\_\_\_\_ to the park.

a. rain

c. are going to

b. rains

d. go to

7. We \_\_\_\_\_ this summer if we \_\_\_\_\_ enough money.

a. will go travelling

c. saves

b. go travelling

d. save

8. He \_\_\_\_\_ very happy if he \_\_\_\_\_ the exam.

a. to be

c. passes

b. will be

d. passed

9. If you \_\_\_\_\_ for dinner, I \_\_\_\_\_ the next time.

a. pay

c. will paying

b. paid

d. will pay

10. If you \_\_\_\_\_ an umbrella indoors, it \_\_\_\_\_ bad luck.

a. opened

c. brings

b. open

d. will bring