Conditionals

Conditionals describe the result of a certain condition. The if clause tells you the condition (If you study hard) and the main clause tells you the result (you will pass your exams). The order of the clauses does not change the meaning.

If you study hard, you will pass your exams.
I will pass your exams if you study hard.

Conditional sentences are often divided into different types.

(Summary

1. Zero conditional=   If you give, he takes.   (Real)

2. First conditional=   If you give, he will take.   (Real)

3. Second conditional=   If you gave, he would take. (**Unlikely/unreal**)

4. Third conditional=.   If you had given, he would have taken. ('')

)

<u>Zero conditional</u>

We use the zero conditional to talk about things that are generally true, especially for laws and rules.

<u>Structure: If/when+present, present</u>
    If I drink too much coffee, I can't sleep at night.
    Ice melts if you heat it.
    When the sun goes down, it gets dark.

<u>First conditional</u>

We use the first conditional when we talk about future situations we believe are real or possible.

Structure: If+present, future = will do

(future= subject + **will**/shall/can/may/might) could/should+do)

> *If it doesn't rain tomorrow, we'll go to the beach.*
>
> *Arsenal will be top of the league if they win.*
>
> *When I finish work, I'll call you.*

It is also common to use this structure with *unless, as long as, as soon as* or *in case* instead of *if*.

> *I'll leave as soon as the babysitter arrives.*
>
> *I don't want to stay in London unless I get a well-paid job.*
>
> *I'll give you a key in case I'm not at home.*
>
> *You can go to the party, as long as you're back by midnight.*

Second conditional

The second conditional is used to imagine present or future situations that are impossible or unlikely in reality.

Structure: If+past, future past= subject + would do

(future past= subject+**would**/could/might/should+ do)

> *If you worked hard, you could compete in the Olympics next year.*
>
> *If I won a lot of money, I'd buy a big house in the country.*
>
> *I wouldn't worry if I were you.*

When *if* is followed by the *verb be,* it is grammatically correct to say *if I were, if he were, if she were* and *if it were*. However, it is also common to hear these structures with was, especially in the he/she form.

> *If I were you, I wouldn't mention it.*

If she was prime minister, she would legalise it..

He would travel more if he was younger.

Third Conditional

The third conditional is used to imagine a different past. We imagine a change in a past situation and the different result of that change.

Structure: If + past perfect, >> subject+ would have + past participle.

If I had understood the instructions properly, I would have passed the exam.

We wouldn't have got lost if my phone hadn't run out of battery.

Mixed Conditionals

We can use mixed conditionals when we imagine a past change with a result in the present or a present change with a result in the past.

1. Past/Present

Here's a sentence imagining how a change in a past situation would have a result in the present.

structure: If + past perfect, would do.

If I hadn't got the job in Tokyo, I wouldn't be in Japan now.

2. Present/Past

Here's a sentence imagining how a different situation in the present would mean that the past was different as well.

structure: If + past simple, would have + past participle.

If this meeting wasn't important, I wouldn't have phoned you last night.