

A ‘conditional’ or ‘If’ sentence describes a condition. In English, we use conditional sentences for a different purpose:

- To make predictions
- To give advice
- To express dreams
- To discuss mistakes in the past
- To make apologies
- To discuss hypothetical, imaginary, contrary-to-the fact situations in the present and the past

Each conditional sentence contains 2 clauses: (A clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb.)

If Clause (Dependent) / Main Clause (Independent)

Punctuation note:

Put a comma if the Dependent or if Clause comes before the Main (Independent) Clause. Don’t put a comma if the Main Clause comes before the Dependent or if Clause.

EX. If you need me, I’ll help you. *BUT* I’ll help you if you need me.

Each conditional sentence:

1. Expresses a different meaning
2. Refers to a different time
3. Uses a different combination of tenses

Conditional sentences fall into two categories:

1. Real
2. Unreal

REAL CONDITIONS / PRESENT REAL

- **Meaning:** Refers to a situation that may or may not happen in the future.
- **Time Reference:** Future
- **Tense Combinations:**

<u>If Clause</u>	<u>Main Clause</u>
Simple Present	will + By (base form of the Verb)
EX. If a student studies, he will pass the test	
Present Continuous	will + by
Present Perfect Continuous	can, should, might + by

Modals: Can, Have to, Must, Should

Used for: Predictions, Probability / Possibility, Uncertainty

UNREAL CONDITIONS IN THE PRESENT / PRESENT UNREAL

- **Meaning:** Refers to a situation that does not exist (is not real) at the present time.
- **Time Reference:** Present
- **Tense Combinations:**

<u>If Clause</u>	<u>Main Clause</u>
Simple Past	would + by (base form of the verb)
EX. If I had a million dollars, I would travel around the world.	
If the verb to be is used in the If Clause, were used for all the persons.	
EX. If she were rich, she would travel around the world.	
Past Continuous	would, could, might, should + by

Modals: Could, Had to

Contractions: I'd, you'd, he'd, she'd, we'd, and they'd

Used for: Advice, Expressing dreams, Hypothetical, Imaginary, Contrary-to-the fact situations in the present

UNREAL CONDITIONS IN THE PAST / PAST UNREAL

- **Meaning:** Refers to a situation that did not happen in the past.
- **Time reference:** Past
- **Tense combinations:**

<u>If Clause</u>	<u>Main Clause</u>
Past Perfect	would + have + Past Participle
EX. If I had studied for the test, I would have passed.	
Past Perfect Continuous	would, could, might, should + have + Past Participle
Passive	had been + pp

Used for: Discussing mistakes in the past, Past regrets or Hypothetical or Imaginary situations in the past