

CONDITIONALS

0 Conditional:

If + present simple, subject + present simple:

- If I'm hungry, I eat bananas
- If I'm tired, I go to bed.
- If I don't know, I ask.

Note:

- I eat bananas if I'm hungry.
- I go to bed if I'm tired.
- I ask if I don't know.

Switching the sentence order does not require a comma.

1st Conditional (future possibility):

If + present simple, subject + future + infinitive:

- If it snows, I will go skiing.
- If you like, I'll make us both a coffee.
- If we win the lottery, we will never work again.

Compare:

- If it snows, ... (it may snow).
- When it snows, ... (it will snow).

2nd Conditional (future possibility, but unlikely):

If + past simple, subject + would + infinitive:

- If it snowed, I would / I'd go skiing. (you'd, he'd, she'd, we'd, they'd)
- If I knew the answer, I would / I'd say something.
- If we won the lottery, we'd never work again.
- If I was/were a rich man, I would drive a Ferrari.
- If I were/was you, I would not say anything about it.



Note:

- In the *if-part* of the sentence we normally use simple past and not *would*.

However, when asking somebody to do something, *if ... would* is OK:

- I would/I'd be very grateful *if you would/could* stop shouting.
- I would/I'd be delighted *if she would/could* spare just five minutes to help me.

3rd Conditional (impossible situation – the event is over):

If + past perfect, would (not) have + past participle:

- If it had snowed (last week), I would/I'd have gone skiing.
- If I had/I'd known the answer (yesterday), I would/I'd have said something.
- If we had/we'd won the lottery, we would/we'd have never worked again.

Wish is not normally followed by *would*:

- I *wish* I had known it was cancelled. I *wouldn't* have gone. (not: I wish I would have known)

Real conditionals

Possible future events with a **present perfect** verb in the *if*-clause and future form (*will* or *be going to*) in the main clause:

- I'll lend you my car if I've **changed** the winter tyres before the snow arrives.
- If you **haven't done** your homework by the next session on Wednesday, Stuart *is going to* give you a hard time.

Compare:

- If I've **failed** my English test again, I'm going to change my trainer. (Test taken, result unknown)
- If I **fail** my English test again, I'm going to change my trainer. (Test may or may not have been taken)

Extracts from: **English Grammar in Use**, Raymond Murphy, 2012, Cambridge/Klett, **Eats, shoots & leaves**, Lynne Truss, 2003. Profile books Ltd and **Correct English**, J.E. Metcalfe and C. Astel, Clarion books.

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