

## Basic Conditionals

The following information breaks down the conditional into four manageable sections, which are listed in order of probability- the 'zero conditional' structures a **factual\*** sentence, which is **100% probable**, whereas the 'type 3 conditional' is used to express the **impossible**, as it is reflecting on the past.

For a more in depth review of the conditional please see 'In depth review of the conditional' pod cast.

1. The 'zero conditional'. **Facts\* and general truths.** Both clauses are formed using the **simple present**. Either 'if' or 'when' can be used. 'When' refers to something that happens more frequently, whereas 'if' shows that something happens less frequently. However, both terms can be used to form conditional sentences.

**If** the doorbell rings, (**simple present**) someone answers it. (**Simple present**)  
When you drink too much, you get drunk.  
When you eat too much, you feel ill.

The time in these sentences is 'now' or 'always'. This is also known as the 'present **real** conditional' because each of these sentences are real, as opposed to imaginary.

**Please note** that the order of the clauses is flexible:

I feel sick **if** I eat too much chocolate.  
He makes me laugh **when** he tells jokes.

This structure is also often used when giving instructions, by using the imperative in the main clause (tell):

**If** he needs to speak to me, **tell him** I will be staying at the Intercontinental hotel on Park Lane.

2. The 'type 1 conditional'. **Cause and effect: Advice/ predictions.** The tense in the 'if clause' is the **simple present** and the tense in the 'main clause' is the **simple future**.

**If** you don't go to bed early enough, (**simple present**) you will be tired tomorrow (**simple future**).

If you don't wear sun cream, you will get burnt.

If you don't take a coat, you will be cold later.

If you oversleep, you will be late for work.

The time used here is the present or the future. These sentences refer to possible situations (if you don't wear sun cream) and their probable results (you will get burnt).

**Modals** can also be used in order to show a degree of certainty:  
If you don't wear sun cream, you **might** get burnt.  
I **might** go to the party if I get lots of work done today.

**Unless** can also be used in place of if + not:  
I'm not going **unless** you drive me there.  
You will never improve your English **unless** you do your homework.

3. 'Type 2 conditional'. **Unreal, unlikely hypothetical conditions.** The tense in the 'if clause' is the **simple past** and the tense in the 'main clause' is the **present conditional**.

**If** you did your homework, (**simple past**) you **wouldn't** get told off. (**Present conditional**)

If she paid her bills, she wouldn't get into trouble.

If he went to bed earlier, he wouldn't be so grumpy.

If he told her off, she would cry.

If I ate as much chocolate as you do, I would be sick.

If she did her homework, she would learn more quickly. Unfortunately, she never has time to study outside of lessons.

The time is **now or anytime** and the situations mentioned are unreal. They refer to an unlikely situation and a predicted result.

4. The type 3 conditional. **Reflecting on the Past and saying 'what if'?** The tense in the 'if clause' is the **past perfect** and the tense in the 'main clause' is the **perfect conditional**.

**Conditionals:**

Will = **would**

Can = **could**

May = **might**

Shall = **should** (shall is similar to 'will')

'**Ought to**' can also be used in place of should

If you **had over slept** (past perfect), you **would have been** late for work (perfect conditional).

If she **had seen** her son perform in the play, she **would have been** extremely proud.

If they **had come** to the party, they **might have had** a good time.

If Anna **had taken** Chinese classes at school, she **could have got** the job in Hong Kong.

If she **had wanted** to participate in the race, she **should have told** us.

The following role play should further explain this.

Amy: Hello, how are you?

Jack: I'm really well. How about you?

Amy: Oh, I'm fine thanks.

Jack: Where's Sam?

Amy: Oh, he's running a bit late.

Jack: Oh, OK, so he's got his Mum playing host.

Amy: Yes, would you like a drink?

Jack: Yes please, just an orange juice for now, though. I get really drunk if I drink more than a couple. (1)

Amy: Oh well. I oversleep if I have a late night, but that's not going to stop me! (1)

Oh dear, and Kate doesn't drink, so it looks like all this wine's for Sam and me.

How's work?

Jack: It's really busy. This is the first night in weeks that I've finished before 7.

Amy: That's awful. If you don't take care of yourself, you'll make yourself ill. (2)

Jack: I think it's a bit too late for that. I'm always ill. If something's going around, you can guarantee I'll get it. (2)

Amy: Well, if you took better care of yourself, you would be ill less often. (3)

Jack: In an ideal world, I would.

#### #Keys in the lock#

Amy: Oh, here's Sam.

Sam: Hi. How are you? Hi Mum.

Jack: Really good.

Amy: Hello darling. Did you have a good day?

Sam: Can't complain. I got a pay rise today!

Amy: Wonderful! Let's crack open some champagne. I'm just going to put some food together in the kitchen. Can you answer the door, if anyone else arrives? (1)

Sam: Thanks Mum. So, how's your new job?

Jack: It's going really well. If I had seen you last week, it would have been a different story, though.

Sam: Really? Why's that?

Jack: Well, I had a bit of an argument with my new boss... It's all forgotten now, but I wasn't happy with the way I was being treated, so I told him.

Sam: Brilliant. That's really brave of you.

Jack: Well, if I hadn't told him, I probably wouldn't be working there now. (4)

Sam: What makes you say that?

Jack: I can't stay in a job I don't like, so I would have left if I hadn't resolved the situation.

Sam: You're one in a million Jack. Most people spend years in a job they hate and you refuse to spend more than 2 weeks in one unless it's perfect.

Jack: That's right. How about you? Things must be going pretty well.

Sam: Well, I'm not going to lie to you, I'm pretty happy today, but my job is very hard work. I certainly couldn't do it forever. Recruitment can be a cut throat industry. I'll probably move on in another year or so **unless** they make me an offer I can't refuse. (2)

Jack: You drink so fast. If you don't slow down, you'll be drunk by the time your Mum returns with the food! (2)

Sam: You're right. I should probably slow down... but Kate's gonna be here soon and you know how I feel about her.

# Doorbell #

Sam: That must be Kate.

Kate: Hi, how are you guys?

Sam: Hello Kate. I'm really well thank you.

Kate: Hi. Hi, Jack. Where's your Mum Sam?

Sam: She's in the kitchen.

Jack: Come in and have a drink... before Sam drinks the house dry!

Kate: Oh, I don't drink on work nights. I'll just have a coke or something.

Jack: No, we're celebrating. Sam got a pay rise today!

Kate: Did he? Well done Sam. That's brilliant. Well Sam can have my share of the wine then! If I drink tonight, I'll cause havoc on the trading floor tomorrow! (2)

Sam: How is life in the finance industry?

Kate: It's brilliant. I'm working hard, but it's worth it. I hear you guys are planning to take a holiday soon...

Sam: We are actually. Aren't you coming?

Kate: Well If I'd known earlier I could have booked time off work, but I only found out this morning! (4)

Jack: I guess a week isn't enough notice...

Kate: No, not really.

Jack: I thought Sam had told you. If I had know how disorganised these guys are, I would have told you myself. (4) My girlfriend has a villa in Tuscany, so we're going to stay there for 10 days.

Kate: Make sure you remember your sun cream this time. If you don't wear factor 12, you'll burn again. (2)

Jack: I know. I burnt so badly when we went to Mexico last year. I'm just going to see how your Mum's doing. If I don't help her, we'll never eat! (2)

Sam: You're probably right.

Kate: It's been ages Sam. Congratulations on the promotion.

Sam: Thanks. I know; it has been a while. I'm sorry about last time.

Kate: That's fine. It's all forgotten now.

Sam: So, how's your fiancé?

Kate: Well, if I had seen him recently, I would be able to tell you. (Mixed conditional-see 'the conditional in depth').

Sam: What?

Kate: He's away on business for 3 weeks. I spoke to him last night, though.

Amy: Hi guys. Dinner's now ready! Sorry for the wait. You guys look very cosy.

Sam: That looks delicious. I wish I hadn't eaten already...

Amy: You've already eaten?

Sam: Only joking!

Amy: If you had already eaten, I would have been really angry. (4) I warned you in advance that I was cooking. You're not funny, you know... OK guys, get stuck in before it goes cold. Where's my glass?