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# How to use conditionals

Making conditional sentences is an everyday part of your English language, and introducing them to your English conversation can really improve your level of communication. To have a general idea of how all the conditionals work, take a look at this overview so you can start to get an idea of what they are and when we use them.

## What is a Conditional Sentence?

A conditional sentence is based on the word 'if'. There are always two parts to a conditional sentence – one part beginning with 'if' to describe a possible situation, and the second part which describes the consequence. For example:

*If it rains, we'll get wet.*

We can also invert the two parts of a conditional sentence so that the 'if' part comes second, and this is especially common in questions. For example:

*What will you do if you miss the train?*

*How can you finish the project if you don't have a computer?*

There are four types of conditional sentences: the zero conditional, the first conditional, the second conditional and the third conditional.

It is also possible to mix the second and third conditional. Let's look at each conditional to see how we use them.

## The Zero Conditional

We use the zero conditional to talk about permanent truths, such as scientific facts, and general habits. The structure is:

### If + Simple Present Tense in the if clause; Simple Present Tense in the main clause.

Examples: If you **heat** water to 100°, it **boils.**

If you **eat** a lot, you **put on** weight.

If I'**m** tired, I **go** to bed early.

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## The First Conditional

We use the first conditional to talk about a realistic situation in the present or future. The structure of the first conditional is as follows:

### If + Present Simple in the if clause; Will/Can/Must + Verb(imperative) in the main clause.

Examples: If you'**re** free later, we **can go** for a walk.

If they'**re** hungry, I'**ll make** some sandwiches.

If he **studies** hard, he'**ll do** well in the exam.

Another way to make first conditional sentences is to use 'unless' which means 'only if' or 'except'. As with 'if', the word 'unless' can never be followed by 'will' but only by the present simple.

For example: ***Unless** you **hurry up**, you won't catch the bus.*

*I'll carry on doing this work, **unless** my boss **tells** me to do something else.*

## The Second Conditional

We use the second conditional to talk about improbable or impossible situations in the present or future. Here is the structure:

### If + Simple Past in the if clause; Would/could + verb(imperative) in the main clause

For example: *If I **had** more time, I'**d exercise** more.* (But I don't have more time so I don't.)

*If I **were** rich, I'**d spend** all my time travelling.* (But I'm not rich so I can't.)

*If she **saw** a snake, she'**d be** terrified.*

A common expression used to give advice has the second conditional structure. The expression is 'If I were you, I'd..', meaning 'in your situation, this is what I would do'.

For example:

A: *I've got a headache.*

B: ***If I were you, I'd** take an aspirin.*

A: *I don't understand this.*

B: ***If I were you, I'd** ask your teacher for help.*

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## The Third Conditional

We use the third conditional to talk about impossible situations, as in the second conditional, in the past. We often use the third conditional to describe regrets. The structure is:

### If + Past Perfect in the if clause; Would/could have + Past participle in the main clause.

Here are some examples:

*If we **had left** earlier, we **would have arrived** on time.*

*If you **hadn't forgotten** her birthday, she **wouldn't have been** upset.*

*If they **had booked** earlier, they **could have found** better seats.*

## Mixed Conditionals

It's possible to combine the second and third conditional in one sentence when we want to make a hypothesis about the past that has a consequence in the present. In this case, the structure is:

### If + Past Perfect in the if clause; Would/could + verb in the main clause.

Here are some examples:

*If you'**d studied** harder, you'**d be** at a higher level now.*

*We'**d be** lying on a beach now if we **hadn't missed** the plane.*

*They'**d have** much more confidence if they **hadn't lost** so many matches.*

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## Basic Concepts of Active-Passive voice

The active voice describes a sentence where the subject performs the action stated by the verb. In Passive voice, the subject is acted upon by the verb. Below given are the few examples which will help you clear your basic concepts on active passive voice.

**For example:**

Tim painted the entire hall. (Active)

The entire hall was painted by Tim. (Passive)

- **Structure- Active voice sentences**

Subject + Verb + Object (S + V + O)

- **Structure- Passive voice sentences**

Object + Verb + Subject (O + V + S)

**Change of Tenses (Active to Passive)**

| TENSES | | ACTIVE | PASSIVE |
|---|---|---|---|
| PRESENT | SIMPLE/INDEFINITE | V1 | IS/AM/ARE + V3 |
| | CONTINUOUS | IS/AM/ARE + V(-ing) | IS/AM/ARE + BEING + V3 |
| | PERFECT | HAS/HAVE + V3 | HAS/HAVE + BEEN + V3 |
| | PERFECT CONTINUOUS | HAS/HAVE + BEEN + V(-ing) | NO PASSIVE |
| PAST | SIMPLE/INDEFINITE | V2 | WAS/WERE + V3 |
| | CONTINUOUS | WAS/WERE + V(-ing) | WAS/WERE + BEING + V3 |
| | PERFECT | HAD + V3 | HAD + BEEN +V3 |
| | PERFECT CONTINUOUS | HAD + BEEN + V(-ing) | NO PASSIVE |
| FUTURE | SIMPLE/INDEFINITE | WILL/SHALL + V1 | WILL/SHALL + BE +V3 |
| | CONTINUOUS | WILL/SHALL + BE + V(-ing) | NO PASSIVE |
| | PERFECT | WILL/SHALL + HAVE + V3 | WILL/SHALL + HAVE + BEEN + V3 |
| | PERFECT CONTINUOUS | WILL/SHALL + HAVE + BEEN+ V(-ing) | NO PASSIVE |

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**Remember:** Passives not possible for the following:

- **No object**

For example: He sings.

- **'To be' verbs (is/am/are/was/were etc.) without main verbs.**

For example: I am a doctor.

- **Future continuous tense**

For example: She will be baking cookies at this time tomorrow.

- **Perfect continuous tense**

For example: They have been trying to get over this for 2 weeks.

## The English Tenses

Before I go into the details of the *simple past* and the *present perfect*, it's important that you fully understand the concept of tenses in English.

**what are tenses?**

Tenses, as some of you may already know, are a way of measuring time. Tenses tell us whether a particular action has already happened, is happening or will happen. Every sentence we speak or write in English is in one of these tenses.

So how do we determine the tense being used when looking at a sentence?

The answer is simple.

The verbs we use tell us which tense is being used. If the verb form changes, the tense changes (and vice versa).

In English, there are three main tenses: past, present and future.

Here's a simple trick to remember which is which.

When we talk about any event or action (let's say, eating a cookie), it can only happen in one of these three *times:*

- It happened *yesterday* or even earlier (Past): *I talked to Hana yesterday.*

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- It happened *today* or right now (Present): *I am talking to Hana on the phone.*
- It will happen *tomorrow* or even later (Future): *I will talk to Hana at work tomorrow.*

I personally found the model of using yesterday, today and tomorrow to memorize the three tenses of past, present and future to be very useful. Plus, it's a good way to start learning basic tenses. Once you're confident, we can look at them in greater detail and focus on the exceptions.

You might have noticed how the verb "to talk" changed depending on the tense of the sentence. Indeed, if you're going to master tenses, you need to know:

How and when to change the verbs (such as *ate, eat, eating* and *eaten)*

Which helping verbs to use (such as *have, will, is* and so on) in certain cases

Now, each of these three tenses can be further divided into four "sub" tenses. These are simple, continuous, perfect and perfect continuous.

The best way to explain this is to rewrite the above example in each of the sub-tenses. For now, don't worry about why we have to use so many tenses. Instead, just focus on how the verb ("to read") is changing in each.

Or you could try writing them on your own and checking the answers below.

❖ **Past Tense**

- Simple Past: *I talked to Hana yesterday.*
- Past Continuous: *I was talking to Hana when you came in.*
- Past Perfect: *I had talked to Hana before eating dinner.*
- Past Perfect Continuous: *I had been talking to Hana for two hours before we finally hung up.*

❖ **Present Tense**

- Simple Present: *I talk to Hana at least once a day.*
- Present Continuous: *I am talking to Hana right now.*
- Present Perfect: *I have talked to Hana before.*
- Present Perfect Continuous: *I have been talking to Hana for three hours now.*

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❖ **Future Tense**

- ✓ Simple Future: *I will talk to Hana tomorrow.*
- ✓ Future Continuous: *I will be talking to Hana on the train ride tomorrow.*
- ✓ Future Perfect: *I will have talked to Hana by next week.*
- ✓ Future Perfect Continuous: *I will have been talking to Hana for two hours at 3:00.*

Now that you've reviewed the basics of tenses, let's move on to the difference between past simple and present perfect. If you still aren't feeling confident, consider brushing up on your knowledge of how to use tenses before continuing.

**Present Perfect vs. Past Simple**

**NB:** Learn the Key Differences and Never Confuse the Two Again

**A. The Past Simple**

- What Is It and When Do We Use It?

The past simple (also called the simple past), as the name suggests, is the tense we use to talk about any action or event that has already happened.

Moreover, we use this tense when we know the exact or specific details of the time of the event (such as yesterday, the previous winter, last year, five hours ago and so on). In other words, the event is already over and finished.

Here are some examples:

- ✓ *I wrote a few lines of the story in my notebook last week.*
- ✓ *He went on an exchange program two years ago.*
- ✓ *She ate the entire mango yesterday.*
- ✓ *I talked to Beza on the phone five minutes ago.*

In each example, the action was finished within a certain time frame. In short, the simple past is used when talk about events that already finished.

We may also use this tense when we want to focus on telling people about the action.

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Here are two examples:

- ✓ *We danced a lot at the party.*
- ✓ *I walked home from school.*

In both cases, the focus is on telling of the action ("dancing a lot," "walking home") that took place in the past and not on the results or consequences of the action. We're just talking about an event in the past and aren't discussing the possible effects of it.

To sum up, we use the simple past to refer to an event or an action that took place in "finished time" or to simply focus on talking about the action itself.

❖ Verb Forms to Use with the Past Simple

To write a sentence in the simple past, we have to convert the verb to its simple past form.

But verb conjugation can be tricky to get a hang of.

For regular verbs, there are a few rules regarding how to convert them. But for irregular verbs, you need to memorize the verb forms.

Let's take a regular verb like *to walk* and an irregular verb like *to eat,* for example.

- ✓ *She walked home from the party.* (We added an "-ed" to "walk")
- ✓ *He ate a pizza for dinner.* ("Eat" changes to "ate")

**B. The Present Perfect**

➢ What Is It and When Do We Use It?

The present perfect is one of the forms of the present tense. But we normally use it to talk about events that have already happened.

These events may be ongoing or completed but usually, the events took place recently and the time is unspecified.

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other words, present perfect is listed under the present tense because the event usually took place just now or recently. Therefore, it's still "connected" to the present.

Take a look at these two examples:

- ✓ *I have written a few lines already.* (It took place recently.)
- ✓ *My husband and I have known each other for five years now.* (Even though the time is mentioned here, the action is still ongoing or continuing into the present—we *still know* each other.)

But in most cases of the present perfect, the time of the action is "unfinished" or unspecified, like in this example:

- ✓ *He has been on an exchange program to Sweden.* (The time isn't specified)

We also use this tense when the focus is more on the "result" of the action instead of the "telling" of the action. For example:

- ✓ *She has eaten the mango all by herself.* (The focus is on the result of the action—the mango is now finished by her!)
- ✓ *"Have you done your homework?"* (A yes/no answer is wanted.)

### Verb Forms to Use with the Present Perfect

Another way to differentiate between the two tenses is to simply look at the verbs used.

- In the simple past, we use just one verb and it's used in the "past" form.
- In the present perfect, we use the helping verbs *has* or *have* along with the "participle" form of the main verb (which is the verb that indicates the action).

In other words, to convert a verb to the present perfect, we can use this simple formula:

- has/have + participle form of the verb

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if the verb is *to fly,* then the present perfect form would be: *has/have + flown,* as in the following examples:

- *The birds have flown away.*
- *My pet bird has flown away.*

For regular verbs, the participle and simple past forms are the same. For irregular verbs, the participle forms must be memorized.

### ❖ Simple Past – Past Perfect Simple

**Form**

| Simple Past | Past Perfect Simple |
|---|---|
| 2nd column of irregular verbs<br>*Example:* I spoke | *had* + 3rd column of irregular verbs<br>*Example:*I had spoken |
| regular verbs: infinitive + *ed*<br>*Example:* I worked | regular verbs: form of *have* + infinitive + *ed*<br>*Example:* I had worked |

**Exceptions**

**Exceptions when adding *ed*:**

when the final letter is *e*, only add *d*
*Example:* love - loved
after a short, stressed vowel, the final consonant is doubled
*Example:* admit - admitted
final ' *l* ' is always doubled in British English (not in American English)
*Example:* travel - travelled
after a consonant, final *y* becomes *i* (but: not after a vowel)
*Example:* worry - worried
but: play - played

**Use**

We use Simple Past if we give past events in the order in which they occurred. However, when we look back from a certain time in the past to tell what had happened before, we use Past Perfect.

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**ormal order in the past or looking back to an event before a certain time in the past?**

| Simple Past | Past Perfect Simple |
|---|---|
| **some time in the past**<br>***Example:*** Aster got up at seven. She opened her birthday presents and then the whole family went to the zoo. | **before/up to a certain time in the past**<br>***Example:*** Before her sixth birthday, Aster had never been to the zoo. |

**Signal Words**

| Simple Past | Past Perfect Simple |
|---|---|
| first<br>then | already<br>up to then<br>before that day<br>after* |

*Note: "After" is only used as a signal word for Past Perfect if it is followed by a subject + verb, meaning that one action had been completed before another action began (the new action is in *Simple Past*).

*Example:* After the family had had breakfast, they *went* to the zoo.

However, if "after" is followed by object + subject + verb, the verb belongs to the new action and is therefore in *Simple Past*.

*Example:* After her visit to the zoo, Jane *was* exhausted.

**More exceptions with signal words**

- **When**

Depending on the situation, "when" can be used with *Simple Past* or Past Perfect. Compare the following examples:

*Example:* When Aster *saw* the elephants, she *was* amazed. *(at the same time)*

When Aster had seen the elephants, she *wanted* to see the giraffes. *(second action happened after the first action had been completed)*

When Jane *went* to see the elephants, she had already seen the lions. *(second action had been completed when the first action took place)*

- **Before**

"Before" as well can either be used with *Simple Past* or Past Perfect. If the action after "before" is a new action, use *Simple Past*. If the action after "before" started

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and was not completed) before a certain time in the past, use Past Perfect.
Compare the following examples:

*Example:* Aster had read a lot about elephants *before she went* to the zoo.

Aster *went* to the zoo before she had finished reading her new book about elephants.

# Collocations

## ❖ What is a collocation?

A collocation is two or more words that often go together. These combinations just sound "right" to native English speakers, who use them all the time. On the other hand, other combinations may be unnatural and just sound "wrong". Look at these examples:

| natural English... | unnatural English... |
|---|---|
| **The fast train**<br>**fast food** | the ~~quick~~ train<br>~~quick~~ food |
| **a quick shower**<br>**a quick meal** | a ~~fast~~ shower<br>a ~~fast~~ meal |

**Why learn collocations?**

- Your language will be more natural and more easily understood.
- You will have alternative and richer ways of expressing yourself.
- It is easier for our brains to remember and use language in chunks or blocks rather than as single words.

**How to learn collocations**

- Be **aware** of collocations, and try to **recognize** them when you see or hear them.
- Treat collocations as **single blocks** of language. Think of them as individual blocks or chunks, and learn *strongly support*, not strongly + support.
- When you learn a new word, write down other words that collocate with it (*remember rightly*, *remember distinctly*, *remember vaguely*, *remember vividly*).
- Read as much as possible. Reading is an excellent way to learn vocabulary and collocations in context and naturally.
- Revise what you learn regularly. Practise using new collocations in context as soon as possible after learning them.

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- Learn collocations in groups that work for you. You could learn them by **topic** (time, number, weather, money, family) or by a particular **word** (*take action*, *take a chance*, *take an exam*).
- You can find information on collocations in any good learner's dictionary. And you can also find specialized dictionaries of collocations.

*Tell me who you go with and I'll tell you who you are Saying*

**Types of collocation**

There are several different types of collocation. Collocations can be adjective + adverb, noun + noun, verb + noun and so on. Below you can see seven main types of collocation in sample sentences.

**1. adverb + adjective**

- Invading that country was an **utterly stupid** thing to do.
- We entered a **richly decorated** room.
- Are you **fully aware** of the implications of your action?

**2. adjective + noun**

- The doctor ordered him to take **regular exercise**.
- The Titanic sank on its **maiden voyage**.
- He was writhing on the ground in **excruciating pain**.

**3. noun + noun**

- Let's give Mr Jones a **round of applause**.
- The **ceasefire agreement** came into effect at 11am.
- I'd like to buy two **bars of soap** please.

**4. noun + verb**

- The **lion** started **to roar** when it heard the **dog barking**.
- **Snow was falling** as our **plane took off**.
- The **bomb went off** when he started the car engine.

**5. verb + noun**

- The prisoner was hanged for **committing murder**.
- I always try to **do my homework** in the morning, after **making my bed**.
- He has been asked to **give a presentation** about his work.

**6. verb + expression with preposition**

- We had to return home because we **had run out of money**.
- At first her eyes **filled with horror**, and then she **burst into tears**.
- Their behaviour was enough to **drive anybody to crime**.

**7. verb + adverb**

- She **placed** her keys **gently** on the table and sat down.
- Mary **whispered softly** in John's ear.
- I **vaguely remember** that it was growing dark when we left.

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# Denotation Vs Connotation

**Denotation** is the literal meaning of a word. For example, take the word "vintage." By its very definition, when you say that something is vintage, it means that it was made a long time ago. Perhaps your friend's dad drives a vintage Corvette. That's denotation.

**Connotation,** on the other hand, is an indirect or implied meaning or feeling. Take the word "vintage" again. It has a separate connotation.

A lot of women love to shop for vintage clothing. That doesn't mean they're looking for something simply made a long time ago. In fact, popular brands make "vintage" clothing every day. It just means it's an old style that's making a comeback, such as headscarves or Mary Jane shoes. The word carries a nostalgic, desirable quality.

Here's another way to look at it. Denotation is the standard definition of a word, whereas connotation is the feeling evoked by a word. Let's consider another word: gritty.

The definition of gritty is "having a rough texture." So, in a literal sense (denotation), we might say:

This sandpaper is gritty. It'll make that countertop nice and smooth.

But, consider this sentence: That side of town is pretty gritty.

In that sense, we're not saying that section of the city has a "rough texture" in a literal sense. Instead, we're saying it's a tough neighborhood, perhaps with issues related to crime and poverty. As such, you'll want to have your wits about you when walking through its streets. That's connotation.

**Examples:**

**Cheap:** to cost very little

Denotation: This shirt is cheap enough for me to afford.

Connotation: That t-shirt was so cheap, it pilled in a matter of weeks.

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The second sentence suggests that the t-shirt wasn't just a bargain buy. Rather, it was of poor quality. The implication is that a higher-quality garment wouldn't have pilled.

**Dabble:** to show a superficial interest

Denotation: I dabble in painting.

Connotation: You should never dabble in drugs.

When someone says you should never dabble in drugs (or anything harmful), they mean you shouldn't touch them, never mind a superficial interest or momentary experimentation. The connotation of "dabbling in drugs" is to "stay back." Don't even go there.

**Innocent:** free from guilt or wrongdoing

Denotation: The court said she was innocent.

Connotation: What does she know. She's so innocent.

In this context, the implication is that she's not just free from guilt; she's lacking in worldly knowledge or experience. She's naive. It carries a derogatory connotation, implying that the speaker has more "smarts" than the woman she's talking about.

**Jabber:** speak in quick, often nonsensical talk

Denotation: The baby jabbers.

Connotation: I thought he would never stop jabbering.

To wish someone would stop talking can mean anything. Perhaps you want quiet; maybe they're not letting you get a word in. But, saying that someone is jabbering carries the negative connotation of someone who's talking nonsensically and is starting to annoy you.

**Knockout:** a harsh blow that knocks someone unconscious

Denotation: The boxing match ended in a knockout.

Connotation: Julia Roberts was a knockout in that red dress.

This is a term for an extremely beautiful man or woman. It's supposed to conjure up images of people passing out at the sight of a stunner. Of course, this never actually happens, but the connotation is total enchantment.

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## Useful Words with Meanings

- Lecture: a talk or speech given to a group of people to teach them about a particular subject
- Lecturer: a university instructor or professor who gives lectures.
- Transient: not last long; passing quickly as in speech
- Distractions: things that make it difficult to pay attention or concentrate during listening.
- Verbatim: word for word; writing down exactly as spoken.
- Cue: a signal(such as a word, a phrase, or a gesture) that indicates something important; a hint.
- Discriminating: recognizing differences; selecting
- Culture: set of attitudes,values,beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next.
- Honing: grinding and polishing
- Linchpin: somebody or something that is an essential element for the success of something
- Debut: young woman's first official social engagement
- Culminated: to reach a climax or point of highest development, or make something do this
- Prone: inclined to do or be affected by something; lying face down.
- Coveted: to have a strong desire to possess something that belongs to somebody else
- Maneuver: a movement or action that requires skill or dexterity.
- Charity: an organization that collects money and other voluntary contributions of help for people in need; the willingness to judge people in a tolerant or favorable way
- Career: a job or occupation regarded as a long-term or lifelong activity
- Profession: an occupation that requires extensive education or specialized training
- Professional: engaged in an occupation as a paid job rather than as a hobby
- Professional career: having the opportunity to gain higher pay and recognition with greater success
- Cultural relativism: not judging a culture to our own standards of what is right or wrong
- Endeavour: an attempt to achieve goal
- Tangible: perceptible by touch
- Intangible: unable to be touched; not having physical presence
- Egalitarianism: the doctrine that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities
- Alleviate: to make something less bad
- Diligent: showing effort in work

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