♦ **Note 3:** We use **if** (not **when**) for something impossible or imaginary.

Compare

When I were you, I would refuse. **(wrong)**

If I were you, I would refuse. **(right)**

☞ (We'll see about when and if in time and conditional clause respectively in detail)

1.11 In case and if

In case is not normally used like **if**

A. in case

We use **in case** to say why somebody does or doesn't something. Or To talk about things we do '**because**' something else might happen.

(in case meaning **because)**

☞ **In case + present tense**

Example

I am taking my umbrella with me **in case** it rains.

(**Meaning:** ..... **because** it might rain later)

Write down his address **in case** we forget it.

(**Meaning:** ..... **because** we might forget)

I am buying some food. I am hungry later.

→ I am buying some food now **in case** I am hungry later.

(**Meaning: because** I might hungry later)

♦ **Note 1:-** In the examples above, **in case** is used to say that you do something now **in case/ because** something happens latter.

-. **'If'** is not allowed in this case.

Lulu might phone to night. I don't want to go out **in case** he phones. **(Meaning: because** it is possible he phones)

♦ **Note 2:** We can use **in case + past** to say why somebody did something.

Example

I wrote my address for Martha **in case** she couldn't remember.

(Meaning: It was possible that she could forget)

They rang the bell again **in case** they hadn't heard it first.

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(Meaning: because perhaps they didn't hear)

- **Note 3:** After **in case** we don't use **will.** Instead, we use **present tense** with a future meaning.

Compare

Take an umbrella with you. It might rain.

→ Take an umbrella **in case** it **will** rain (wrong)

→ Take an umbrella **in case** it **rain** (right)

- **Note 4:** We can also use **should + infinitive.**

In this structure **should** means **might.**

Example

Go buy train **in case** there should/ might be a lot of traffic on the roads.

Should is more common after **in case** in the past.

- **Note 5: 'in case'** to give advice and warnings.

Example

Don't touch an acid **in case** it harms you. **(warning)**

Don't go out without a coat **in case** you get a cold. **(warning)**

Study hard **in case** the exam should be difficult. **(advice)**

☞ We have just mentioned that **in case** is not the same as **if**

Compare

I am buying some sugar **in case** I make tea later.

(Meaning: I am buying it now, before I make it)

I'll buy some sugar **if** I make tea later.

(Meaning: I'll buy it at the time I make it)

You should insure your bicycle **in case** it is stolen.

(Meaning: ..... because it might be stolen)

- **Note 6: In case** with **'of'** (in case of) is not the same as **'in case'.**

'In case of = if there is'

Example

In case of the fire, please leave the building as quickly as possible.

(In case of the fire = if there is the fire)

In case of emergency, phone this number.

(In case of emergency = if there is emergency)

- **Note 7: 'If'** meaning **'although'** or **'even if'** but not **'in case'**

Example

I will finish this report **if** it kills me.

(= I'll finish this report **although/ even if** it kills me)

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Summary

- Don't Confuse **'in case'** and **'if'**

Consider the following patterns carefully.

I do **'A'** in case **'B'** happens. = I do **'A'** first because **'B'** might happen later.
I do **'A'** if **'B'** happens. = I do **'A'** if **'B'** has happened.

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