

IF AND THE CONDITIONAL

The 'zero' conditional, where the tense in **both parts** of the sentence is the **simple present**:

If + simple present If you heat ice If it rains	simple present it melts. you get wet.
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In these sentences, the time is **now or always** and the situation is **real and possible**. They are often used to refer to general truths.

The Type 1 conditional, where the tense in the 'if' clause is the **simple present**, and the tense in the main clause is the **simple future**

If + simple present If it rains If you don't hurry	Simple future you will get wet we will miss the train.
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In these sentences, the time is the **present or future** and the situation is **real**. They refer to a **possible condition** and its **probable result**.

Study these examples:

I'll phone you when I get home.

We'll go out when it stops raining.

The time in the sentence is future, but we use a present tense (**I get, it stops**) in the **when** part of the sentence. We do not use **will** in the **when** part.

The same thing happens after **while / before / after / as soon as / until or till**:

*I'm going to read a lot **while I'm** on holiday.*

*I'll go back home on Sunday. **Before I go**, I'd like to visit the museum.*

*Wait here **until I come** back.*

You can also use the present perfect (**have done**) after **when / after / until / as soon as**:

*Can I borrow that book **when you've finished** with it?*

*Don't say anything while Ian is here. Wait **until he's gone**.*

If you use the present perfect, one thing must be complete before the other (so the two things do not happen together).

***When I've phoned** Kate, we can have dinner.*

(= First I'll phone Kate and after that we can have dinner).

Compare when and if:

We use *when* for things which are sure to happen:

*I'm going shopping later. **When** I go shopping, I'll buy some food.*

We use *if* for things that will possibly happen:

If it's raining this evening, we won't go out.

*I might go shopping later. (it's possible) **If** I go shopping, I'll buy some food.*

The Type 2 conditional, where the tense in the 'if' clause is the **simple past**, and the tense in the main clause is the **present conditional**:

If + simple past

If it rained

If you went to bed earlier

Present conditional

you would get wet

you wouldn't be so tired.

In these sentences, the time is **now or any time**, and the situation is **unreal**. They are **not** based on **fact**, and they refer to an **unlikely or hypothetical condition** and its **probable result**.

In the other part of the sentence (not the if-part) we use **would/ wouldn't**.

Could and **might** are also possible:

*If you took more exercise, you **might feel** better.*

*It it stopped raining, we **could go** out.*