# IF AND THE CONDITIONAL

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

| **If + simple present** | **simple present** |
| --- | --- |
| If you heat ice | it melts. |
| If it rains | you get wet. |

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** | **Simple future** |
| --- | --- |
| If it rains | you will get wet |
| If you don't hurry | we will miss the train. |

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** | **Present conditional** |
| --- | --- |
| If it rained | you would get wet |
| If you went to bed earlier | 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.*