Zero conditional: facts and repeated results

Use it when the same condition always produces the same result.

IF + PRESENT SIMPLE	+	PRESENT SIMPLE

Both clauses describe a general truth or routine.

The result happens whenever the condition happens.

If people don’t drink water,	they become dehydrated.

IF and WHEN can both work for regular results

When my battery reaches 5%,	I charge my phone.

Zero conditional: form and use

COMMON USES

- scientific facts
- habits and routines
- automatic results

If you press this button, the screen turns on.

FORM AND WORD ORDER

Present simple in both clauses

If + present, present.

The clauses can change order.

The screen turns on if you press this button.

Zero conditional practice

Complete the sentences, then compare your answers.

1. If you _____ ice, it _____. (heat / melt)

2. My dog _____ excited if someone _____ the doorbell. (get / ring)

3. If I _____ breakfast, I _____ hungry before lunch. (skip / feel)

MAKE YOUR OWN

4. Write one fact about food, weather or science.

5. Write one sentence about a habit or routine.

Zero conditional answers

Suggested answers

1. If you heat ice, it melts.

2. My dog gets excited if someone rings the doorbell.

3. If I skip breakfast, I feel hungry before lunch.

Ask two students to share one original sentence each.

First conditional: a real future possibility

Use it when a future condition feels possible.

IF + PRESENT SIMPLE + **WILL + BASE VERB**

The future result depends on the condition.

The if-clause refers to the future without will.

If it rains tomorrow,	**we’ll stay at home.**

The condition can be negative

If you don’t leave now,	**you’ll miss the bus.**

First conditional: choices in the result

The result clause can show different meanings.

will	If she studies, she’ll pass.	**prediction**
may or might	If we hurry, we might catch it.	**possibility**
can	If you finish, you can go home.	**permission**
imperative	If you see Alex, call me.	**instruction**

First conditional practice

Complete the sentences, then compare your answers.

1. If we _____ now, we _____ on time. (leave / arrive)

2. She _____ upset if you _____ her. (be / not tell)

3. If the shop _____ open, I _____ some milk. (be / buy)

MAKE YOUR OWN

4. Make a promise beginning: If you help me, ...

5. Predict a result: If the weather is good tomorrow, ...

First conditional answers

Suggested answers

1. If we leave now, we'll arrive on time.

2. She'll be upset if you don't tell her.

3. If the shop is open, I'll buy some milk.

Ask two students to share one original sentence each.

Zero or first?

ZERO: A REGULAR RESULT

If I drink coffee at night, I don’t sleep well.

This happens regularly.

present + present

FIRST: ONE FUTURE SITUATION

If I drink coffee tonight, I won’t sleep well.

This refers to tonight.

present + will

Second conditional: an unreal present or future

Use it for imagined situations, unlikely possibilities and advice.

IF + PAST SIMPLE + **WOULD + BASE VERB**

The time can be now or the future.

The past form creates distance from reality.

If I had more time,	**I would learn Japanese.**

Advice: If I were you …

If I were you,	**I’d talk to her.**

Second conditional: the hidden reality

If I knew the answer, I would tell you.	Reality: I do not know the answer.
If she lived closer, we could meet more often.	Reality: she does not live close.
If we won the lottery, we might travel for a year.	The situation feels unlikely.
If I were you, I would apologise.	The speaker gives advice.

Second conditional practice

Complete the sentences, then compare your answers.

1. If I _____ rich, I _____ around the world. (be / travel)

2. What _____ you _____ if you _____ a year off? (do / have)

3. If Sara _____ closer, we _____ her more often. (live / see)

MAKE YOUR OWN

4. Give advice: If I were you, ...

5. Imagine you could live anywhere. What would you do?

Second conditional answers

Suggested answers

1. If I were rich, I would travel around the world.

2. What would you do if you had a year off?

3. If Sara lived closer, we would see her more often.

Ask two students to share one original sentence each.

First or second?

FIRST: REAL POSSIBILITY

If I get the job, I'll move to Berlin.

I think getting the job is a real possibility.

present + will

SECOND: MORE DISTANT

If I got the job, I'd move to Berlin.

I imagine it, but it feels less likely.

past + would