

POETIC ENGLISH WITH LUC MULINDWA

Conditional Sentences (Overview)

Conditionals describe the result of a condition: What happens if something else happens.

Conditional Sentences

Zero Conditional

real (always true)

If you take fish from
water, it dies.

First Conditional

real (possible)

If it rains,
we will stay
at home.

Second Conditional

unreal (unlikely)

If I were you, I
would stop chasing
people.

Third Conditional

unreal (past)

If the government
had been serious,
the war would have
ended in eastern Congo.

Zero Conditional

Used for universal truths,
facts, or habits.

If + Present Simple,
Present Simple

If you **heat** water, it **boils**.

If it **rains**, the ground **gets** wet.

If people **eat** too much,
they **gain** weight.

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Fisrt Conditional

Used for real and possible situations in the future.

If + Present Simple,
will + Verb

If I study hard, I will pass the exam.

If my friend invites me, I will go.

If the government and the M23 rebels find an agreement, the war will end.

Second Conditional

Used for unreal or imaginary situations in the present/future.

If + Past Simple,
would + Verb

If I **were** the president,
I **would treat** my people fairly.

If she **were** rich, she
would buy a mansion.

If they **studied** harder,
they **would succeed**.

Third Conditional

Used for unreal situations
in the past.

If + Past Perfect,
would have + Past Participle

If I **had** studied, I **would have**
passed the test.

If she **had** left earlier, she
would have caught the train.

If I **had known** the Cité de refuge
church earlier, I **wouldn't have**
faced everything I went through
in the past.

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Mixed Conditionals

Used when the if-clause and result clause refer to different times.

If I had studied medicine, I would be a doctor now.

If she were more careful, she wouldn't have made that mistake.

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Common Mistakes

Typical mistakes learners make in conditional sentences.

X Wrong	✓ Correct
If it will rain, we will stay home.	If it rains , we will stay home.
If I would study, I would pass.	If I studied , I would pass.
If she had left, she would catch the bus.	If she had left, she would have cautchtthe bus.