

## CONDITIONALS

### First and second conditionals

We form the first conditional with *If* + present tense, ... *will* + infinitive (or *be going to* + infinitive).

We use the first conditional to talk about something that we think is likely to happen in the future.

*If no more than six people **sign** up for the course, it **will be** a financial disaster.*

*If things **haven't improved** by the end of the month, I'm **going to take** matters into my own hands.*

We form the second conditional with *If* + past simple, ... *would* + infinitive.

We use the second conditional to talk about:

- something that the speaker thinks is unlikely to happen in the future.

*I'd **be** very surprised if you **managed** to sit through the whole film in one go – it's five hours long.*

*A fasting diet is not for me. If I **didn't eat** for 24 hours, I **would be** unable to function properly.*

- something that is the opposite of the real / present situation

*If she **were** a man, she **would be** a senior executive by now.*

*If they **had** more money, they **wouldn't live** in such a deprived part of the city.*

Notice that we can also use *might* in place of *will* or *would* to express less certainty about a result.

*If you leave / left now, you **might avoid** all the other commuters at rush hour.*

Notice that the one occasion when we use *would* in an *if*-clause is if *would* has the sense of 'be willing'.

*I **would be** very grateful if you **would send** your reply by the end of today.*

Another form we use for the second conditional is *If* + *was* / *were* to + infinitive, ... *would* + infinitive.

*If doctors' surgeries **were to close** at the weekends, there **would be** a lot of protests.*

*If I **was to tell** you a secret, **would you be able** to keep it to yourself?*

We do not use this form with stative verbs.

*If I **knew** him better, I **wouldn't feel** so shy about asking him. (NOT *If I ~~were to know~~ ...*)*

### Third conditional

We form the third conditional with *If* + past perfect, ... *would have* + past participle.

We use the third conditional to talk about imaginary or unreal situations in the past. The event did not happen – we imagine the event and we imagine the result.

*If the water **had been** warmer, I **would have swum** more.*

*If the team **had lost** again, I **think** the manager **would have been sacked**.*

### Mixed conditionals

A mixed conditional is a combination of second and third conditional forms.

We use mixed third + second conditional sentences to talk about a past condition and its result in the present or the future (not the past).

*If I **hadn't gone** to America, I **probably wouldn't be** working for Google now.*

We use mixed second + third conditional sentences to talk about a present condition and its imagined past result.

*If I **were** more suspicious by nature, I **would have questioned** the board's motives.*

#### ► Exercise 1

### Were it not for / Had it not been for

We sometimes use *was* / *were it not for* + noun or *had it not been for* + noun to say one action is or was dependent on another.

***Were it not for** the bad weather, we **would be able to have** the party outside in the garden.*

***Were it not for** his parents, he **probably wouldn't have become** a doctor.*

***Had it not been for** his bravery, **many more people would have died**.*

When it is awkward to form a noun with this structure, we use the phrase *the fact that* + subject + verb.

***Were it not for the fact that** she has lots of clothes already, I'd get her something nice to wear for her birthday.*

#### ► Exercise 2

### Substitution in conditional sentences

When we state the true situation and then follow it with a conditional sentence, we do not usually repeat the main verb in the conditional clause.

*I **didn't see** the film, but if I **had**, I'm sure I **would have walked out before the end**. (if I had = if I had seen it)*

*She loves Stevie Wonder. If she **didn't**, she **wouldn't be going halfway around the world to see him in concert**.*

*(If she didn't = If she didn't love him)*

We can also substitute using the word *Otherwise* or the phrase *If not* (meaning 'If the opposite were the case').

*She loves Stevie Wonder. **Otherwise**, she **wouldn't be going halfway around the world to see him in concert**.*

*I expect he'll be here soon. **If not**, I'll call him.*

#### ► Exercise 3

## Inversion in conditional sentences

We use inversion in more formal speech or writing (and also in literary style). There is no difference in emphasis between an inverted and a non-inverted conditional sentence. There are three types of inversion in conditional sentences.

- first conditional with *should*  
**Should** you **incur** any expenses, we will reimburse you.
- second conditional with *were to* or *were*  
**Were** the Prime minister to **resign**, the job **would** automatically pass to his deputy.  
**Were** I better qualified, I **would apply** for the position.
- third conditional with *had*  
**Had** we **known** you were coming, we **would have insisted** on your staying here instead of at a hotel.

### ► Exercise 4

## CONDITIONAL CONJUNCTIONS

There are various conditional conjunctions. Some simply replace *if* with a slight change in emphasis or meaning. Examples of conditional conjunctions include:

as long as      assuming that      on condition that  
providing that      unless

*I will attend the conference **on condition that** I don't have to give a presentation.*

***Assuming that** the product is competitively priced, it should do very well.*

***Supposing (that)** the polls are right, the centre party is going to win a sizeable majority.*

*I wouldn't have asked **unless** I had thought it was possible.*

There are other conjunctions which substitute not only *if* but other words also. Examples include:

but for      in case of      in the event of/that  
otherwise      whether or not

*Let's go. **Otherwise**, we'll be late.*

***In case of** fire, please leave the building by the rear exit.*

***In the event of** the lift not working, you can use the stairs.*

*They considered long and hard **whether or not** to continue the experiments.*

***But for** Julian coming to my defence, I think we would have lost the argument there and then.*

### ► Exercises 5 and 6

## EXERCISES

**1** Complete the sentences with the verbs in the correct conditional form.

- 1 If you \_\_\_\_\_ (not / have) to work ever again, what \_\_\_\_\_ (you / do) with your life?
- 2 I accepted the job in the end, because I was worried that if I \_\_\_\_\_ (refuse) it, it \_\_\_\_\_ (affect) my career prospects at some later date.
- 3 If there \_\_\_\_\_ (be) any fresh brown bread in the shop, \_\_\_\_\_ (you / get) me some, please?
- 4 I changed all my Euros back into US dollars just before the value of the Euro fell. I \_\_\_\_\_ (lose) a lot of money if I \_\_\_\_\_ (delay) changing it.
- 5 If he \_\_\_\_\_ (not / be) such a stubborn person, people \_\_\_\_\_ (find) him much easier to deal with.
- 6 Jack says that he \_\_\_\_\_ (help) us if he \_\_\_\_\_ (can), but he's not sure when he will be able to get away from work.
- 7 She \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a graduate now, if she \_\_\_\_\_ (not / drop) out of college.
- 8 If I \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a more generous person, I \_\_\_\_\_ (probably / give) more of my time to help them, but I'm afraid I only spent a couple of hours with them.
- 9 If you \_\_\_\_\_ (not / ask), you \_\_\_\_\_ (never / get) anything in life.
- 10 If the bridge \_\_\_\_\_ (be damaged) in the accident, they \_\_\_\_\_ (still / run) trains over it.

**2** Read the sentences. Then write conditional sentences using the words in brackets.

- 1 Francesca's negotiating skills helped us to win the contract. (had it not)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Installing CCTV would make the premises more secure. (were to)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3 It's the cost that stops me from taking regular language lessons. (were it not)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4 The one piece of advice I would give any young person is to travel while they are still young. (was to)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5 The politician got elected because his party was so good at using social media. (had it not)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6 The news is always so depressing. That's why I don't follow it. (were it not)  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Complete the conversations. Use one word in each space.

- 1 A: Did you get caught in the rain?  
B: No. If I \_\_\_\_\_, I'd be soaking wet.
- 2 A: Do you need any help?  
B: I don't think so, but if I \_\_\_\_\_, I'll let you know.
- 3 A: Do you own this house?  
B: You're joking. If I \_\_\_\_\_, I'd be a rich woman.
- 4 A: Is that your car?  
B: No. If it \_\_\_\_\_, I'd give you a lift home. I'm taking the bus, I'm afraid.
- 5 A: Are you taking a day off next week?  
B: I hope so. If \_\_\_\_\_, I'll take one the following week.

### 4 Complete the inverted conditional sentences in a natural way.

- 1 Should \_\_\_\_\_, we have a back-up plan.
- 2 Had \_\_\_\_\_, they would have been eliminated from the competition.
- 3 Should \_\_\_\_\_, please make your way to the nearest exit as quickly as possible.
- 4 Were \_\_\_\_\_, Shakespeare would be a multi-millionaire.
- 5 Had \_\_\_\_\_, I'm sure he would have heard the noise of the burglar breaking the window.
- 6 Were \_\_\_\_\_, I would certainly accept.

### 5 Complete the conversations with these conditional conjunctions. There are two extra conjunctions.

in case supposing	in the event of unless	otherwise whether or not	provided that
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- 1 A: \_\_\_\_\_ that we invite Isabelle but not her boyfriend?  
B: You can't do that! You have to ask people's partners too, \_\_\_\_\_ you want to offend them.
- 2 A: He asked \_\_\_\_\_ I was prepared to work abroad at some point in the future.  
B: What did you say?  
A: I said \_\_\_\_\_ I had adequate notice, I probably wouldn't mind.
- 3 A: \_\_\_\_\_ mechanical failure, the machine will always switch itself off.  
B: Well that's what happened, but I didn't know that.

### 6 Correct the mistake in each sentence.

- What would you do if you would be in my situation?
- If the shops stayed open later in the evening, it will be easier for working people.
- I had helped you if I could.
- If I'd have known you wanted to come, I would have asked you.
- Were they to live nearer me, I would see them more often.
- I will look at your report later if I can do it.

## ADVERBS AND WORD ORDER

In general, we form adverbs by adding the ending *-ly* to the adjective.

*She spoke to him **encouragingly** about his job prospects.*

There are some adjectives which keep the same form when they become adverbs. Examples include: *fast, hard, late, long* and *straight*.

*She thought about the decision **long** and **hard**. (not *longly* and *hardly*.)*

When an adjective already ends in *-ly* (e.g. *costly, friendly, lively, lonely, lovely*), we have to use a phrase such as *in a ... way* or *in a ... manner*.

*He spoke **in a lively way**.*

*They welcomed us **in a friendly manner**.*

Notice that the adverb *hardly* means something different from the adverb *hard*.

*He **hardly** works. (= almost doesn't work at all)*

*He **works hard**. (= he works a lot)*

Adjectives such as *daily, weekly, monthly* which describe frequency can be used as adverbs or in the phrase 'on a ... basis'.

*The committee meets **monthly**. OR The committee meets **on a monthly basis**.*

### ► Exercise 1

## Position of adverbs

- Adverbs of frequency (e.g. *always, usually, etc.*) go directly before the main verb or directly after the verb *be*. They can also go at the beginning of the sentence for greater emphasis.  
*I **usually** take sugar in my tea. **Sometimes**, though, I have it without.*  
*Branded goods are **usually** more expensive than goods with no brand.*
- Adverbs of degree (e.g. *completely, quite, etc.*) and adverbs of probability (e.g. *certainly, possibly, etc.*) also generally come before the main verb or directly after the verb *be*.  
*He has **probably** decided not to come after all.*  
*We are **absolutely** committed to making this work.*
- Adverbs of manner stay close to the verb they qualify, either coming just before the main verb or after the verb and its direct object. They never come between the verb and its direct object.  
*She held the steering wheel **firmly** with both hands. (not *She held **firmly** the steering wheel*)*  
*Please tell me **honestly** what you think.*  
*He **painstakingly** counted all the receipts one by one to make sure he hadn't missed one.*
- Adverbs which qualify an adjective go directly before the adjective. The only exception is *enough*.  
*They are a **highly skilled** team.*  
*He is **certainly experienced enough** to undertake the task.*