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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Conditionals

**ZERO CONDITIONALS AND
FIRST CONDITIONALS**

EXPLANATION

- **CONDITIONAL** structures are often complex and can improve your IELTS Speaking and Writing grades. IELTS examiners are usually impressed by them!
- You will need to recognise and understand **CONDITIONAL** structures in the IELTS Reading and Listening Tests.
- A **CONDITIONAL** sentence usually has an **if-clause**. It explains a possible or impossible situation in the present, future or past.
- A **CONDITIONAL** sentence usually has a **result clause**. The **result clause** usually describes a possible result of the condition in the **if-clause**.
- You can usually start a **CONDITIONAL** sentence with the **if-clause** or the **result clause**. If you put the **if-clause** first, you normally follow it with a comma.

ZERO CONDITIONALS EXPRESSING WHAT GENERALLY HAPPENS

We can use a present tense in the if-clause and a present tense in the result clause to describe things which are generally true:

- If/When you **live** in a city, you **are** likely to have more opportunities to socialise.
- As long as parents **respect** their adolescent children's independence and **give** them limited autonomy, quarrels and rows **are not** particularly likely.
- Drivers **are** legally entitled to drive **as soon as** they **pass** their test.
- Provided that you **drive** carefully, you **can** usually **avoid** having an accident.

ZERO CONDITIONALS EXPRESSING WHAT GENERALLY HAPPENS

- **If** you **fly** with the crows, you **get shot** with the crows.
- **Unless** journalists **ask** probing questions during press conferences, they **do not** usually **get** information or quotations which they can use in an article.
- **Whenever / When / Every time** it **snows**, I **think** of those unfortunate people living on the streets.

We use when in the if-clause and past tenses in both clauses to refer to something which was generally true in the past:

- **In the past, when** people **lived** in large urban areas, they **were** generally more susceptible to contagious and infectious diseases than those living in sparsely-populated villages.

FIRST CONDITIONALS DESCRIBING THINGS WHICH WILL PROBABLY HAPPEN

To describe probable present and future events, we put a present simple verb in the if-clause, and we use **will** in the result clause:

- **If inflation rises, consumers will have to economise.**
- **As long as they have food on the table and a roof over their head, many people will consider that their economic conditions are acceptable and will never complain.**
- **Unless house prices fall within the next few years, very few young adults will be able to afford to buy their own homes.**
- **If members of the public feel they are becoming poorer in relative terms, some will sign online petitions and others will probably protest outside government buildings.**

FIRST CONDITIONALS DESCRIBING THINGS WHICH WILL PROBABLY HAPPEN

To describe probable present and future events, we put a present simple verb in the if-clause, and we use **will** in the result clause:

- **If I see him tomorrow, I will pass on the good news.**
- **If the company opens a new office in the city, there will be quite a few job opportunities for graduates and school-leavers.**
- **If you don't start behaving properly, your mum will probably give you a smack.**
- **If things don't improve soon, I will start thinking about emigrating.**
- **If it snows and the college has to close tomorrow, I will be absolutely delighted.**

FIRST CONDITIONALS VARIATIONS

We can put other modal verbs in the result clause:

- If you only have a part-time job or a flexible contract which does not guarantee a steady income, you may/might find yourself in debt. (possibility)
- If prices fall, the companies which produce goods may/might need to make staff redundant. (possibility)
- If I find myself struggling to make ends meet, I may/might look for a second job or try to cut down on expenses. (possibility)
- If you have no work to do, you may/can go home. (permission)
- If you want to be taken seriously, you should/must adopt a more professional attitude. (advice/suggestion; command)

FIRST CONDITIONALS VARIATIONS

We can replace **will** with other forms which refer to the future:

- **If you don't get enough sleep, you are going to find it difficult to concentrate.**
- **If you don't eat enough, you are likely to become ill quite soon.**

We can use a present continuous tense in the if-clause to describe something happening at this moment, or something not permanent:

- **If you are feeling pressure, your health will soon suffer.**
- **If you are working hard now, you will reap the rewards later.**
- **If you are living in poor-quality accommodation, you are quite likely to become ill.**

FIRST CONDITIONALS VARIATIONS

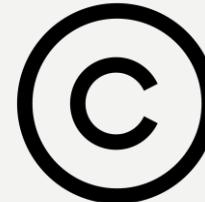
We can put suggestions and advice in the result clause:

- **If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.**
- **If you would like to come to the concert, let me know.**
- **If you find it difficult to concentrate, you should try sleeping more.**
- **If you don't like the way the company operates, why don't you look for a different job?**
- **If you want to become a better writer, you ought to read more good-quality literature.**
- **If you intend to run a marathon next year, you need to start training straightaway.**

FIRST CONDITIONALS VARIATIONS

We can put a present perfect tense in the if-clause when we want to refer to something which probably happened already:

- **If she has arrived at the train station already, she will be here soon.**
- **If the university has filled all of its courses, you will not be able to study there until next year.**
- **If you have not complained to the manager yet, you should write her an email.**
- **If you haven't visited Italy before, you should definitely try to spend at least a month there.**



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Conditionals

WORDS TO REPLACE IF

EXPLANATION

- A **CONDITIONAL** sentence usually has an **if-clause**. The **if-clause** explains a possible or impossible situation in the present, future or past.
- A **CONDITIONAL** sentence usually has a **result clause**. The **result clause** usually describes a possible result of the condition in the **if-clause**.
- **If-clauses** often start with **if**, but can also start with words/phrases like **if only, even if, unless, provided that, should, in case**.

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

WHAT WORDS CAN WE USE

- **If** older people become ill, they can struggle to maintain their independence. (**if** = a possibility)
- **Even if** I lend you the money, it won't solve the problem. (**even if** = a small possibility)
- **Whenever/When** the authorities seek to reduce the pension rate, millions of older people protest angrily. (**whenever/when** = every time; on every occasion)
- **When** we get older, we begin to change our perspective on life. (**when** describes a situation which is certain to happen)

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

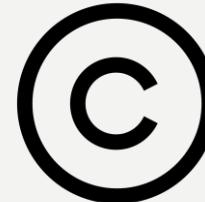
WHAT WORDS CAN WE USE

- **As soon as** we reach retirement age, many of us become quite lazy and lethargic. (**as soon as** = immediately after this point in time)
- It will not be possible to guarantee peace in the world **until** we guarantee fairness and equality for all. (**until** = not before this point in time)
- **Unless** older people are active, involved and mentally stimulated, they often become slower, less confident and less intelligent. (**unless** = if not; except if)
- **As long as** those in their seventies and eighties are physically fit, there is no reason for them to retire from work. (**as long as** = if this condition is met/true)

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

WHAT WORDS CAN WE USE

- **Provided that** the elderly are willing, they should be offered the opportunity to work as life-coaches or mentors for troubled youngsters. (**provided that** = if this condition is met/true)
- **Should** children become anxious whilst at school, it is normal to contact their parents. (**should** = an unlikely possibility)
- We should take our umbrella **in case** it rains. (**in case** = in preparation for a possible situation)
- Elderly residents in sheltered accommodation often carry a special electronic device to alert family members **in case** they fall or have an accident. (**in case** = in preparation for a possible situation)



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Conditionals

THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT
KNOW ABOUT
CONDITIONALS

EXPLANATION

- Is it possible to put **will** or **would** in the **if-clause**?
- Can you use **CONDITIONAL** sentences without a conjunction? (**if**, **as long as**, **unless** etc.)
- Can you start a **CONDITIONAL** sentence with the word **given**?
- Can you start a **CONDITIONAL** sentence with an **-ing form**?
- How do **CONDITIONAL** sentences work with **passives**?

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES UNUSUAL STRUCTURES

We can use **would** or **could** in the if-clause when we want to make a polite request:

- If you **would/could** let me know how many guests are likely to attend, I will organise a suitable conference room.
- I **would** be very grateful if you **would/could** help.
- If you **would** be kind enough to respond quickly, we **would** be very pleased.
- If you **would** like to come to the party, it **would** be wonderful to see you.
- If you **could** give me some idea of your dietary requirements, I will make sure that appropriate food is provided.

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES UNUSUAL STRUCTURES

We can use **would** in the if-clause when we want to describe willingness:

- If children **would** listen to their parents, they **would** make fewer mistakes. (= If children **were willing** to listen to their parents,...)
- If teachers **would** try a bit harder to understand life from their pupils' perspective, they **might** be more effective. (= If teachers **were willing** to understand life from their pupils' perspective,...)
- If parents **would** teach their children to be more polite, the world **would** be a better place. (= If parents **were willing** to teach...)
- If governments **would** invest more in social care, life for vulnerable individuals **might** be better. (= If governments **were willing**...)

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES UNUSUAL STRUCTURES

We can use **will** and **will not / won't** in the if-clause to describe obstinacy/unwillingness:

- If you **will** keep laughing at others, you shouldn't be surprised when they laugh at you. (= If you choose/decide to laugh at others even though you know it is a bad thing to do,...)
- If you **will** leave your house two minutes before the bus is due, it's hardly surprising that you miss it sometimes. (= If you choose/decide to leave your house two minutes before the bus is due, even though you know it is a bad idea,...)
- If you **won't** even try sea-food, how will you find out whether you like it or not? (= If you are unwilling to try sea-food,...)

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES UNUSUAL STRUCTURES

We can use **will** and **would** in the if-clause when the if-clause is the result:

- If it **will/would help you to get the job**, I **will/would be more than happy to give some feedback on your presentation**. (**Giving feedback happens first and getting the job is a possible result of giving feedback**)
- If it **will/would keep you awake**, you should drink a strong coffee (**Drinking a strong coffee happens first and keeping awake is a possible result of drinking a strong coffee**)

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES UNUSUAL STRUCTURES

We can use **should** in the if-clause of a first conditional sentence to show that the condition is not very likely:

- The weather forecast looks good, but if it **should** rain we can have the picnic inside the house. (**Rain is unlikely but possible**)
- If the computer **should** stop working, you can borrow the other one. (**It is unlikely but possible that the computer will stop working**)
- **Should** the parcel arrive today, please could you sign for it. (**It is unlikely but possible that the parcel will arrive today**)
- **Should** we do absolutely nothing about climate change, the consequences for future generations will be dreadful. (**It is unlikely but possible that we will do nothing about climate change**)
-

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES UNUSUAL STRUCTURES

We can write conditional sentences without if:

- **Relying increasingly on air travel will exacerbate climate change** (= If we rely increasingly on air travel, it will exacerbate climate change)
- **Taking the stairs instead of the lift will probably help you to get fitter** (= If you take the stairs instead of the lift, it will probably help you to get fitter)
- **Extending the school-leaving age to 21 would be extremely unpopular with students.** (= If we extended the school-leaving age to 21, it would be extremely unpopular with students)
- **Taxing the rich would be a popular move.** (= If we/governments taxed the rich, it would be a popular move)

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CONDITIONAL SENTENCES UNUSUAL STRUCTURES

We can use **if/when/unless** with a past participle when the noun from the if-clause is at the beginning of the main clause:

- **If/When undercooked, pork can cause food poisoning.** (= If/When pork is undercooked...)
- **If/When spoken well, Korean is a beautiful language.** (= If/When Korean is spoken well...)
- **If/When handled with care, rats can be affectionate creatures.** (= If/When rats are handled with care...)
- **If/When built in areas where earthquakes are common, houses need to have extremely strong structures.** (= If/When houses are built...)

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES UNUSUAL STRUCTURES

We can use **if/when/unless** with a past participle when the noun from the if-clause is at the beginning of the main clause:

- **If/When bought** online, **clothes** can be returned to the retailer. (= **If/When clothes are bought online...**)
- **Unless written** in a formal style, **IELTS essays** may get a low grade. (= **Unless IELTS essays are written in a formal style...**)
- **Unless stored** in a cool place, **bread** is likely to go mouldy within a few days. (= **Unless bread is stored in a cool place....**)
- **Unless used** responsibly, **guns** can be incredibly dangerous. (= **Unless guns are used responsibly...**)

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES UNUSUAL STRUCTURES

We can use given in a similar way. It can replace if it is given / if they are given / if I was given / if they were given etc.:

- Given enough time and investment, many businesses succeed. (= If many businesses are given enough time and investment...)
- Given the opportunity, most of us would work abroad. (= If most of us were given the opportunity...)
- Given the chance, I would certainly live in New Zealand.
- Given the financial support of their parents, many school-leavers would take a gap year.
- Given help, students with additional learning needs can flourish in mainstream education.

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES USING PASSIVES

We can use passive forms in the if-clause and in the result clause of a conditional sentence:

- If I **am asked** to go to the meeting, I **will happily attend**.
- If I **was/were given** the chance to work abroad, I **would be delighted**.
- If something **had been stolen**, we **would have been furious**.
- If it **rains**, the match **will be postponed**.
- If somebody **spotted a tiger in the city-centre**, police officers **would be called**.
- If something **had happened**, I **would have been told**.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Conditionals

SECOND CONDITIONALS

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EXPLANATION

- **SECOND CONDITIONAL** sentences are extremely useful in English.
- We use **SECOND CONDITIONAL** sentences to refer to situations and conditions which are not true, or which are very unlikely in the present or the future.
- IELTS examiners consider **SECOND CONDITIONAL** sentences to be complex, and give candidates a lot of credit for using them in the Speaking and Writing Tests.

SECOND CONDITIONALS DESCRIBING UNLIKELY SITUATIONS

We put the verb in the if-clause in the past/subjunctive form. (The subjunctive form is usually the same as the simple past but we use **were** instead of **was**). The verb in the result clause goes in the conditional form:

- If I **was/were** leader of this country, I **would begin** by introducing legislation to prevent landlords from overcharging their tenants.
- I **would** definitely **put** an end to child poverty if I **was/were** in charge of the country.
- If government ministers **spent** a week living the life of an average citizen, they **would** almost certainly **begin** to understand the reasons why voters complain so bitterly.

SECOND CONDITIONALS DESCRIBING UNLIKELY SITUATIONS

We can use modal verbs in the result clause:

- If government officials **lived** like everybody else, they **might try** to tackle poverty and social deprivation with a bit more urgency. **(possibility)**
- If I **had** a bit more money, I **might go** and live by the sea. **(possibility)**
- If children **were given** less homework, they **could play** more. **(ability)**
- If you **had** a British passport, you **could apply** to move to Australia. **(permission/ability)**

SECOND CONDITIONALS DESCRIBING UNLIKELY SITUATIONS

When we do not expect the action in the if-clause to take place, we can use the structure **if + subject + were + infinitive**:

- If everyone living in rich countries **were to donate** ten percent of their income to the poor, global inequality **would be reduced**.
- If teachers **were to start** taking notice of their pupils' feedback, the quality of their lessons **might improve**.
- If the authorities **were to ban** the use of mobile phones by drivers, there would probably be far fewer accidents.
- If sea-levels **were to rise** drastically, up to a quarter of the planet's population **may have to re-locate**.

SECOND CONDITIONALS DESCRIBING UNLIKELY SITUATIONS

It is possible to use continuous tenses in either clause. We usually use a continuous form to focus on what is happening now:

- If I were as rich as you, I would be living in a huge house.
- If my sister were here right now, she would be laughing at you.
- If I was/were doing your job at the moment, I would be really happy.
- If you were living in my flat, you wouldn't be so happy.
- If you were having to deal with as many complaints as I am at the moment, you would feel extremely stressed.

SECOND CONDITIONAL SENTENCES IN IELTS SPEAKING

You can quite often expand answers in the IELTS Speaking Test with a second conditional sentence:

- If I **were** rich, I **would/might buy** a mansion for my family to live in.
- If I **were** a bit younger, I **would** probably **emigrate** to Canada.
- If I **were** a teacher, I **would try** to inspire my pupils.
- If I **were** leader of my country, I **would ban** the use of fossil fuels.
- If I **were** a President or Prime Minister, I **would do** everything I could to end wars and bring about peace across the entire globe.
- If I **had** loads of money, I **would/might go** on a round-the-world trip.

SECOND CONDITIONAL SENTENCES IN IELTS SPEAKING

- If I **had** more time, I **might take up** a new hobby like karate or judo.
- If I **had** the opportunity to visit anywhere in the world, I **would probably go** to the Galapagos Islands.
- If I **had** the chance to do any job I wanted, I **would probably be** a brain surgeon.
- If I **could** speak French, I **would be** so happy.
- If I **could** have one superpower, it **would be** the ability to fly.
- I think I **would go** crazy if I **lived** in a high-rise apartment block.
- If I **found out** that my best friend had been lying to me, I **would be** devastated.



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Conditionals

THIRD CONDITIONALS

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EXPLANATION

- **THIRD CONDITIONAL** sentences (and other structures which express regrets about the past) are extremely useful.
- We can use **THIRD CONDITIONALS** to describe conditions or situations which did not happen in the past, and results of those things which did/could not happen in the past.
- We can also use other structures which express **regrets** to refer to how we feel about past events.
- IELTS examiners consider **THIRD CONDITIONAL** sentences to be very complex, and give candidates a lot of credit for using them in the Speaking and Writing Tests.

THIRD CONDITIONALS DESCRIBING WHAT DID NOT HAPPEN

We form third conditionals with **had + past participle** in the if-clause and **would have + past participle** in the result clause:

- If I **had worked a bit harder at school**, I **would have gone to university** and **got** a decent job.
- If we **had listened** to warnings about the environment twenty years ago, we **would have been able to take** steps to avoid the looming ecological crisis.
- If The United Nations **had not been formed** in the late 1940s, it is quite likely that many more wars and armed conflicts **would have broken out**. (This sentence includes a passive form)

THIRD CONDITIONALS DESCRIBING WHAT DID NOT HAPPEN

We can use modal verbs with this structure:

- If the developed world **had not exploited** Third World countries over the past couple of centuries, some of the atrocious terrorist attacks which we have witnessed in recent years **might never have happened.** (possibility)
- If I **had never started** smoking, I **might have been** a lot healthier over the past couple of decades. (possibility)
- If modern medical techniques **had been discovered** centuries ago, countless patients **could have been saved.** (ability)
- If I **had known** you were waiting, I **could have given** you a lift (ability)

THIRD CONDITIONALS DESCRIBING WHAT DID NOT HAPPEN

We can use continuous tenses with this structure to describe actions which were continuous or temporary:

- If I had passed my exam, I **would have been working** as a pilot for the past few years.
- If you had told me that you **were coming**, I **would have been waiting** at the train station when you arrived.
- If I **had been living** in Australia last year, I **would have invited** you.
- If you **had been looking** hard, I'm sure you **would have found** your missing ring.
- If you **had been paying** attention and **working** hard, you **would have** passed the exam.

THIRD CONDITIONALS DESCRIBING WHAT DID NOT HAPPEN

We can use **if only** with a third conditional form to express strong regrets about the past:

- **If only it hadn't rained, we would have had a fantastic picnic!**
- **If only we had managed to find a cure for HIV/AIDS in the 1980s, millions of lives would/could have been saved.**
- **If only penicillin had been developed a few years earlier, it would/could have saved thousands of lives during World War 2.**
- **If only I had taken your advice, I wouldn't have lost / might not have lost all my money.**
- **If only we had taken a map with us, we wouldn't have got lost / might not have got lost.**

THIRD CONDITIONALS DESCRIBING WHAT DID NOT HAPPEN

We can start this type of sentence with had:

- Had we **listened** to warnings about the environment twenty years ago, we **would/could have taken** steps to avert the crisis which we now face. (If we had listened...)
- Had the government **banned** cigarettes as soon as it became obvious that they were harmful, many smokers **would not have died**. (If the government had banned cigarettes,...)
- Had the car not **been invented**, the lives of most people living in the twentieth century **would have been** totally different. (If the car,...)
- Had we **known** that the weather was going to be so bad, we **wouldn't have gone** camping. (If we had known,...)

EXPRESSING REGRETS ABOUT THE PAST

We can use **wish** + **past perfect** to express regrets about the past:

- Surprisingly large numbers of graduates **wish** that they **had never bothered** applying to university.
- Quite a large proportion of those who move to urban areas in search of work actually **wish** that they **had never left** their home in the countryside
- I genuinely **wish** I **had prepared** better for the IELTS exam.
- In later life, lots of parents **wish** that they **had brought** their children **up** differently.

EXPRESSING REGRETS ABOUT THE PAST

We can use **should** / **ought to** + **have** + **past participle** to show that something in the past was a mistake or a bad idea:

- As a civilisation we **should have realised** long ago that treating helpless and defenceless animals with cruelty is inhumane.
- I know I **shouldn't have taken** your bike without asking, and I'm really sorry about it.
- You **ought to have been** more careful with that vase.
- Information about health risks associated with smoking **ought not to have been kept** secret for decades. Those who chose not to make this information public **ought to have been put** on trial. (This sentence contains a passive form)

EXPRESSING REGRETS ABOUT THE PAST

We can use **to regret + -ing** to show that we are sorry about what happened in the past:

- I **regret not studying** to be a vet.
- I **regret going** to university when I was eighteen. I wish I had got a job instead.

We can use **to regret + having + past participle** to refer to the past:

- Some of us probably **regret having spent** so much of our lives arguing and quarrelling about petty things which do not seem to matter at all now.
- It is not unusual to find adults who **regret not having worked harder** at school.



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GRAMMAR FOR IELTS

Conditionals

MIXED CONDITIONALS

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EXPLANATION

- **MIXED CONDITIONAL** sentences are extremely useful in English.
- We can use them to describe various possible conditions/situations and results.
- IELTS examiners consider **MIXED CONDITIONALS** to be very complex, and give candidates a lot of credit for using them in the Speaking and Writing Tests.

MIXED CONDITIONALS

UNREAL PAST AND UNREAL PRESENT RESULT

We can describe an unreal past and an unreal present result:

- If governments **had invested** in training for young people in the past, the current workforce **would be** infinitely better qualified.
- The economic situation **would/might not be** so bad if the authorities **had invested** in infrastructure in the past.
- If I **had listened** to advice in the past, I **could/might be** an eminent scientist now instead of an unemployed electrician.
- If you **had bought** shares in that company, you **would be** incredibly wealthy now.

MIXED CONDITIONALS

UNREAL PAST AND UNREAL PRESENT RESULT

We can describe an unreal past, and an unreal result which is happening at this moment or in this time period:

- If I **had gone** to college, I **would/might be working** in a large corporation now and **earning** a fabulously large salary.
- If I **hadn't eaten** something before we came out, I **would** definitely **be complaining** and **looking for** a restaurant now.
- If I **had taken** a job in banking as a graduate, I **would** probably **be living** in a large house in the countryside now.
- If I **hadn't got** that text earlier, I **would be worrying** now.
- You probably **wouldn't be suffering** with that cold if you **had eaten** plenty of fruit and vegetables.

MIXED CONDITIONALS

UNREAL PAST AND UNREAL PRESENT RESULT

We can describe an unreal past (which continued over a period, or which was unfinished), and an unreal result in the present:

- If you **had been paying** attention in the class, you **wouldn't be** so far behind the other students now.
- If you **had been listening** to the teacher during the class, you **would know** what homework we have to do.
- If you **had been training** hard over the past few weeks, you **would be** fitter and stronger now.
- You **wouldn't have to ask** all those questions if you **had been** watching the whole series.

MIXED CONDITIONALS

UNREAL GENERAL SITUATION AND UNREAL PAST RESULT

We can describe an unreal general situation or characteristic, and an unreal past result:

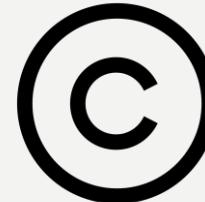
- If, as a species, we **were** wiser, we **would/might have worked out** a way of avoiding warfare and armed conflict long ago.
- If I **was/were** a bit taller, I **would/might have managed** to see the movie perfectly well.
- I **would/might have understood** what she was saying if I **spoke** French.
- If I **lived in a larger house**, I **would/could have invited** them to stay.
- If I **wasn't/weren't** afraid of flying, I **would certainly have gone** to Mexico by plane.

MIXED CONDITIONALS

UNREAL GENERAL SITUATION AND UNREAL PAST RESULT

We can describe an unreal general situation or characteristic, and an unreal past result:

- If our politicians **were** competent, they **might have taken** necessary but unpopular decisions in the past to safeguard our environment.
- If he **was/were** stronger, he **would/could have carried** the suitcases.
- If government ministers **weren't** so desperate to be re-elected, they **would/might have made** better decisions in the past.
- If I **understood** mathematics better, I **would/could have helped** you with your project.
- If I **didn't hate** sitting in meetings all day, I **would have applied** for that job.



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PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Complete the following conditional sentences. You can use the verb **to see** in each sentence:

1. If I s_____ my neighbor in the street on the way to work, I w_____ invite her to the party. There's a good chance I'll bump into her because we usually leave home at about the same time.
2. If I s_____ the President of the country, I w_____ tell her how disgusted I am with her government's incompetence.
3. If I s_____ a coin on the pavement on my way to work this morning, I w_____ probably pick it up. It is surprising how often people drop coins on the floor and just leave them there.
4. If I s_____ a wallet containing a lot of money on the floor I w_____ definitely pick it up and try to identify the owner so that I could return it.
5. If I s_____ a barking dog on my way to work this morning I w_____ probably cross the road. They terrify me.
6. If I s_____ a lion on my way to work today, I w_____ scream and run away as quickly as possible.

ANSWERS

1. If I **see** my neighbor in the street on the way to work, I **will** invite her to the party. There's a good chance I'll bump into her because we usually leave home at about the same time.
2. If I **saw** the President of the country, I **would** tell her how disgusted I am with her government's incompetence.
3. If I **see** a coin on the pavement on my way to work this morning, I **will** probably pick it up. It is surprising how often people drop coins on the floor and just leave them there.
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6. If I **saw** a lion on my way to work today, I **would** scream and run away as quickly as possible.

EXTRA

- **To bump into somebody (informal)** = to meet somebody you know by accident
- **To be disgusted** = to be very angry and upset about something because you believe it is wrong
- **Incompetence** = the inability to do something well or properly
- **To terrify** = to make somebody very afraid or frightened

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Choose the better alternative to complete the following conditional sentences:

1. When the temperature **falls/will fall** below zero and ice forms on roads, motorists need to be especially careful.
2. **As long as/In case** motorists drive carefully and concentrate on the road, they should be able to avoid skidding on the ice or colliding with another vehicle.
3. **Provided that/Unless** sixteen-year-olds can pass the driving test and demonstrate their ability to drive carefully and safely, I see no reason why they **will not/should not** be given a licence
4. Economists estimate that if the price of petrol **will rise/rises**, motorists are far more likely to use their vehicles sparingly or even opt for public transport.
5. If motorists **was/were** allowed to drive at whatever speed they **want/wanted**, the number of road-traffic accidents **would/will** almost certainly rise sharply and the number of fatalities **would/would have** definitely **increase/increased**.
6. If the authorities **insist/insisted** on car-users being re-tested every three or four years, the number of serious car crashes would definitely decline.
7. Those who seriously injure pedestrians, their passengers or other road-users as a result of careless driving usually regret not **having/have** paid more attention to what they were doing.

ANSWERS

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PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Choose the better alternative to complete the following conditional sentences:

1. If those in their seventies and eighties **have/had** to pass a medical examination before getting their driving licence re-issued, I suspect that many **would have/had** stopped driving several years ago.
2. If only passengers and drivers alike **realised/had realised** what terrible injuries a head-on collision can cause, they **would almost certainly** fasten their seat-belts before starting their journey.
3. If the authorities **had built** roads in the past with safety in mind, there **would not be/would not have been** so many car-crashes these days.
4. I wish that all cyclists and motorbike-users **would wear/wear** a helmet. Those who fall off bikes without anything protecting their head often **suffer/suffered** serious brain injuries.
5. If, about a decade ago, the powers-that-be **had introduced** stringent fines for anyone driving whilst using a hand-held electronic device, the number of deaths on our roads **would surely go down/would surely have gone down** over the past few years.
6. When motorcyclists **have/will have** an accident, they often blame other road-users for not having seen them or taken steps to avoid them.
7. **If/When I was/were** younger, I **had/would have** a motorbike.
8. If I **would have/had** a great deal of money, I **would buy/would have bought** myself a Bugatti Veyron a few years ago.

ANSWERS

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8. If I **had** a great deal of money, I **would have bought** myself a Bugatti Veyron a few years ago.

PREPARE for IELTS: Grammar Exercises

Complete the following conditional sentences:

1. If I h_____ worked harder at school, I w_____ probably h_____ b_____ able to go to university.
2. If I h_____ worked harder at school, I w_____ probably h_____ a well-paid job now.
3. If I h_____ l_____ to expert advice about smoking when I was a teenager, I w_____ h_____ spent most of the last twenty years coughing.
4. If I h_____ s_____ so much money on cigarettes during my life, I w_____ be so poor now.
5. If the government h_____ b_____ a better public transport network in the 1980s, there probably w_____ h_____ b_____ such a huge rise in the number of cars bought in the following decades.
6. If the government h_____ b_____ a better public transport system in the past, the amount of carbon we currently pump into the atmosphere w_____ b_____ lower.

ANSWERS

1. If I **had** worked harder at school, I **would** probably **have been** able to go to university.
2. If I **had** worked harder at school, I **would** probably **have** a well-paid job now.
3. If I **had listened** to expert advice about smoking when I was a teenager, I **wouldn't have** spent most of the last twenty years coughing.
4. If I **hadn't spent** so much money on cigarettes during my life, I **wouldn't** be so poor now.
5. If the government **had built** a better public transport network in the 1980s, there probably **wouldn't have been** such a huge rise in the number of cars bought in the following decades.
6. If the government **had built** a better public transport system in the past, the amount of carbon we currently pump into the atmosphere **would be** lower.