

11 Bachillerato - CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

Type I : Real Conditional

a) If + Simple present + will

Both condition and result are very likely to happen

If John gets a good result, he will (he'll) study medicine.
If he fails his exams, he will go abroad.

b) If + Simple present + Imperative

This is a way of giving advice or instructions

If you feel tired, drink a cup of coffee.
If you can't wake up, buy an alarm clock.
If you see my wife, tell her I'll be late for dinner.

c) If + should + imperative

In this way we can suggest that something is unlikely to happen, or is not particularly probable.

If you should run into Peter Bellamy, tell him he owes me a letter.

d) If + Simple present + Simple present

This is a way of talking about laws of nature or things that always happen

If you heat ice, it melts.
If you fail your exams, you have to take them again in September.

e) If + Simple present + may

The result of the condition is just a possibility.

If we go to John's party, we may have a good time.
If we don't give them directions, they may get lost.

f) If + Simple present + can

If I haven't enough time today, I can wash your car tomorrow.

We use this form when we make present decisions about future ability. Otherwise we use *will be able to*.

If you lose her telephone number, you won't be able to contact her later.

Type II: Hypothetical conditional

It is called so because the condition is contrary to the facts or because it is very improbable. We use this conditional to imagine what would it be like if things were different.

a) If + Simple past + would

If I were the president, I would end unemployment.
If I won the lottery, I would buy a Ferrari.

If I were you, I'd start packing now.

b) If + Simple past + might

The result of the condition would be just a possibility.

*If you drove drunk, you might have an accident.
If he weren't so selfish, he might be happier.*

c) If + Simple past + could (the meaning of *could* here is *would be able to*).

If I had another , 500, I could buy a car.

d) If + were to + would

If war were to break out, I would emigrate to Mars.

(This makes a future possibility sound less probable).

Type III: Impossible conditional

The condition didn't happen in the past, and so the result didn't happen either. It is used for speculating about past events.

a) If + Past perfect + Perfect conditional

If he had studied, he would have passed.

b) If + Past perfect + might have

If someone had heard the S.O.S., their lives might have been saved

c) If + Past perfect + could have (the meaning is *could have been able to*).

If my parent's hadn't been poor, I could have gone to university

Unless

Unless has a similar meaning to *if not*, in the sense of 'except if'.

*Come tomorrow unless I phone. (=...if I don't phone / except if I phone.)
I'll take the job unless the pay is too low. (=if the pay isn't too low /except if the pay is too low.)
I'll be back tomorrow unless there's a plane strike.
Let's have dinner out – unless you're too tired.*

Unless can be used instead of *if not* when we refer to exceptional circumstances which would change a situation. We do not use *unless* to refer to something negative that would be the main cause of the situation that we are talking about.

*My wife will be very upset if I don't get back tomorrow.
(NOT ~~My wife will be very upset unless I get back tomorrow.~~)
If the speaker does not get back, this will be the main cause of his wife's unhappiness – *if not* doesn't mean 'except if' here.)*

*She'd look nicer if she didn't wear so much make-up.
(NOT ~~She'd look nicer unless she wore so much make up.~~)*

I'll be surprised if he doesn't have an accident soon.
(NOT ~~*I'll be surprised unless he has an accident soon.*~~)

Notice

The main clause can come first and the if clause second, especially in questions.

What will he do if he fails his exams?

Inversion in conditional sentences

In literary style, we can sometimes omit **if** changing the word order subject / auxiliary. This has nothing to do, of course, with an interrogative sentence.

If you should run into Peter Bellamy, tell him he owes me a letter. = Should you run into Peter Bellamy...

If she were my daughter, I would send her to a boarding school. = Were she my daughter...

If war were to break out, I would emigrate to Mars. = Were war to break out...

If he had studied, he would have passed. = Had he studied...

EXERCISES

1.- Change the following conditionals type I into types II and III.

- 1.- If he doesn't return the money, he will have problems with the bank.
- 2.- Unless you wear a thick coat, you may catch a cold.
- 3.- What will you do if you don't pass your driving test?
- 4.- If it stops snowing we can go for a walk.
- 5.- If you are a good boy, I will take you to the cinema.

2.- Rewrite the following pairs of sentences into conditionals type I, II or III as in the example).

You were not at home yesterday. Your little brother had an accident. (type III)

If you had been at home yesterday, your little brother wouldn't have had an accident.

- 1.- I'm not the president. I think many things should be changed in this country. (type II)
- 2.- I didn't revise enough. I failed my English exam. (type III)
- 3.- That pullover looks my size. I need a new pullover. (type I)
- 4.- I never win the lottery. I would like to travel round the world. (type II)
- 5.- She was watching TV. The children started a fire. (type III)
- 6.- Perhaps they will come tomorrow. They love Chinese food. (type I)

3.- CONDITIONALS TYPE I. Make the cues into complete sentences.

- 1.- If / it / not / rain / we / have / picnic.
- 2.- I / not / help / you / unless / you / give / me / money.
- 3.- Mary / not / get / job / if / Jane / apply.
- 4.- If / I / not finish / job / by 8 o'clock / I / ring / you.
- 5.- If / you / not / smoke / you / can / sit / front / plane.

4.- CONDITIONALS TYPE I. Complete the following sentences.

- 1.- I won't go there unless...
- 2.- If you refuse to help me...
- 3.- If we don't share the world's resources...
- 4.- I'll mend the television myself...
- 5.- ... unless you change your mind.

5.- CONDITIONALS TYPE I. PRESENT + PRESENT. Answer the following questions.

- 1.- What do you do if you have a headache?

- 2.- What happens if plants don't get any water?
- 3.- What happens if you heat a spray bottle?
- 4.- What do men wear if they go to a very formal party?
- 5.- What happens if an iron object gets wet?
- 7.- What do you get if you mix blue and yellow?
- 8.- What can you do if you are over eighteen?
- 9.- What do you use if you can't see well?
- 10.- What happens if you put a fork into an electric socket?

6.- CONDITIONALS TYPE II. Make the cues into complete sentences.

- 1.- If / I / rule / world / every day / be / first / day / spring
- 2.- It / be / better / if / you / leave / at once.
- 3.- If / she / be / my girlfriend / I / buy / her / flowers / every day.
- 4.- If / I / be / John / I / find / new job
- 5.- If / Peter / not / have / so much money / He / not / be / so popular.

7.- CONDITIONALS TYPE II. Complete these sentences.

- 1.- If I were an astronaut...
- 2.- She'd probably faint if...
- 3.- ... unless he paid me.
- 4.- If ..., I might be able to help you.
- 5.- Would you leave me alone if... ?

8.- CONDITIONALS TYPE III. Make the cues into complete sentences.

- 1.- If / it / rain / yesterday / we / stay / indoors.
- 2.- We / win / match / last week / if / you / play / better.
- 3.- He / arrive / ages ago / if / train-drivers / not / be / on strike.
- 4.- What / you / do / if / you / win / pools / last week?
- 5.- I / finish / this book / last year / if / you / help / me.

9.- CONDITIONALS TYPE III. Make the cues into questions and then answer them.

e.g. *weather / be / fine / yesterday?*

What would you have done if the weather had been fine yesterday?

- If the weather had been fine yesterday I would have spent the day in the countryside.

- 1.- teacher / not / come / today?
- 2.- electricity / fail / yesterday evening?
- 3.- boyfriend (or girlfriend) / leave / you / yesterday?
- 4.- burglar / break in / last night?
- 5.- it / snow / this morning?

10) CONDITIONAL SENTENCES: MIXED TYPES.

Put the verbs in brackets into the correct tenses:

- 1.- If you (find) a skeleton in the cellar don't mention it to anyone.
- 2.- If you pass your examination we (have) a celebration.
- 3.- What (happen) if I press this button?
- 4.- I should have voted for her if I (have) a vote then.
- 5.- If you go to Paris where you (stay)?
- 6.- If someone offered to buy you one of those rings, which you (choose)?
- 7.- The flight may be cancelled if the fog (get) thicker.
- 8.- If the milkman (come) tell him to leave two pints.
- 9.- Someone (sit) on your glasses if you leave them there.
- 10.- You would play better bridge if you (not talk) so much.
- 11.- What I (do) if I hear the burglar alarm?
- 12.- If you (read) the instructions carefully you wouldn't have answered the wrong question.
- 13.- I could repair the roof myself if I (have) a long ladder.
- 14.- Unless the turn the radio off I (go) mad.

- 15.- If you were made redundant what you (do)?
- 16.- We'll have a long way to walk if we (run) out of petrol here.
- 17.- If you shake that bottle of port it (not be) fit to drink.
- 18.- I'll probably get lost unless he (come) with me.
- 19.- You (not have) so many accidents if you drove more slowly.
- 20.- If you (wear) a false beard nobody would have recognized you.
- 21.- If she (leave) the fish there the cat will get it
- 22.- Unless they leave a lamp beside that hole in the road somebody (fall) into it.
- 23.- You'll get pneumonia if you (not change) your wet clothes.
- 24.- If I had known that you couldn't eat octopus I (not buy) it.
- 25.- If they (hang) that picture lower people would be able to see it.
- 26.- She (be able) to walk faster if her shoes hadn't such high heels.
- 27.- I (bring) you some beer if I had known that you were thirsty.
- 28.- If you had touched that electric cable you (be) electrocuted.
- 29.- If the story hadn't been true the newspaper (not print) it.
- 30.- I (not buy) things on the instalment system if I were you.
- 31.- Dial 999 if you (want) Police, Ambulance, or Fire Brigade,
- 32.- You (not be) any use to me unless you learn to type.
- 33.- If anyone attacked me, my dog (jump) at his throat.
- 34.- If he were in he (answer) the phone.
- 35.- The ship would have run aground if the pilot (make) one mistake.
- 36.- I shouldn't have taken your umbrella if I (know) that it was the only one you had.

10) CONDITIONAL SENTENCES: mixed types.

Finish these sentences, taking care to use correct tenses.

- 1.- If he had taken my advice...
- 2.- If you ate less...
- 3.- We'll send for the doctor if...
- 4.- If she practised more...
- 5.- If you had checked the petrol before we started...
- 6.- Try on the blue one if...
- 7.- If these gates are locked...
- 8.- If we leave before breakfast...
- 9.- If the river rises any higher...
- 10.- Her life might have been saved if...
- 11.- If the volcano starts erupting...
- 12.- Unless it is a nice day...
- 13.- He would lend it to you if...
- 14.- Unless this hotel gets another cook...
- 15.- If the storm becomes worse...
- 16.- If your uncle sees you...
- 17.- If you didn't shake the camera so much, your photographs...
- 18.- I'd have brought my coat...
- 19.- If you don't like the picture...
- 20.- He would have given her diamonds...
- 21.- If you had asked his permission...
- 22.- If the fire had been noticed earlier...
- 23.- You would have been angry if...
- 24.- If you leave the gate open...
- 25.- You will have to go to the dentist if...
- 26.- He would have been drowned if...
- 27.- If I'd had a car...
- 28.- If Tom rings while I'm out...

11.- INVERSION IN THE CONDITIONAL SENTENCE.

Remember that this structure is only used in a very formal style of language.

- 1.- If you should find a silver key-ring somewhere in the classroom, tell me.
- 2.- If the Government were to lose the next general election, many things would be changed in this country.
- 3.- If he had won the first prize, we would have had a party in celebration.
- 4.- If you should have any difficulties, don't hesitate to contact me.
- 5.- If I were to move to a new town, I would try to keep in touch with my friend here.
- 6.- If my parents had allowed me to go out yesterday evening, I would have talked to that girl.
- 7.- If John had seen his girlfriend kissing Andrew, something terrible might have happened.
- 8.- If the 1992 celebrations had been held in 1991, it would have been quite absurd.
- 9.- If you should forget to bring a dictionary, tell your teacher in advance.
- 10.- If the driver of the train hadn't reacted so quickly, the accident would have been much worse.