

# Conditionals: Types 0 and 1

This is the first edition of a three-part grammar point covering conditionals types 1, 2 and 3 (also known as first, second and third conditionals).

## What is a conditional? And why are there many types?

A conditional is a grammatical construction with two clauses connected by a conjunction (very often 'if', but not always), wherein there is a relation of cause and effect between the two clauses.

The type of conditional you will employ in a sentence will depend on several different factors, including:

- ✓ whether or not the speaker considers the situation to be real or hypothetical (imaginary and unreal).
- ✓ whether the events in question are always true, happened in the past or will happen in the future.

## Type 0

The 0 conditional is used in sentences where the relationship between the events or situations described in each clause is certain. It's a form that is often used when talking about rules and laws, things that are always true or automatic reactions.

### For example:

Life is easy if you pass through it untouched by sadness, disease, disability or death.

When life gives me lemons, I make lemonade.

The structure for the zero conditional is as follows:

**Main clause:** subject + verb in the present tense (+ complement)

**Conditional clause:** conjunction (usually 'if' or 'when', but others are possible) + subject + verb in the present tense (+ complement)

The clauses can come in any order in a sentence: main clause first, then conditional clause, or conditional clause first and then the main clause.

## Type 1

The first conditional (type 1), on the other hand, is used when the relationship between the events or situations in each clause is not completely certain. Nonetheless, the situation we are imagining as a whole is a real one, which we might expect to take place in the real world. In other words, it isn't imaginary.

### For example:

If you go to Avebury, you'll see numerous ancient stones, as well as a lot of tourists.

If you ask anyone over 40 about Michael Jackson, they will talk to you about his famous album **THRILLER**.

The structure here is:

**Main clause:** subject + modal + verb in the infinitive (+ complement)

**Conditional clause:** conjunction (usually 'if') + subject + verb in the present tense (+ complement)

The most common modal verb used in the first conditional is 'will', because it indicates certain prediction. However, it is not the only modal possible; any other modal will work just as well, including **might** or **may** (for probability), as well as modals for ability (**can**), obligation (**have to**, **must**) and making suggestions (**should**).

### For example:

If Donald Trump goes to see Natasha Stoyanoff's musical series, he might not be very happy about it.

If you want to see a music video from the golden age of MTV, you should watch Michael Jackson's 'Thriller'.

Although the relationship between the events in the above sentences is not always certain, the situations are all part of the real world, and not imaginary situations. This is important to keep in mind, in particular when we start looking at sentences in the second and third conditionals (in upcoming issues).

**EXERCISE 1** Complete the sentences

Complete the sentences using the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

- 1/ Cheryl Hunter \_\_\_\_\_ (to think) that if you draw on the sum of your experiences, this \_\_\_\_\_ (can + to make) you a better person.
- 2/ If a young person \_\_\_\_\_ (to watch) 'Thriller', they \_\_\_\_\_ (will + to discover) the voice of famous horror actor Vincent Price.
- 3/ If an artist \_\_\_\_\_ (to sell) enough albums, he or she \_\_\_\_\_ (to be inducted) into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.
- 4/ When a shopper \_\_\_\_\_ (to go) to Irregular Choice's website, they \_\_\_\_\_ (can + to purchase) a wide range of eccentric shoes.
- 5/ When the weather \_\_\_\_\_ (to be) nice, people \_\_\_\_\_ (to play) cricket in Avebury.

**EXERCISE 2** Correct the mistakes

Correct the mistakes in the sentences below, or leave as is if there's no mistake.

- 1/ If you watches MTV today, you won't see videos like 'Thriller' any more.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2/ People who wanted to be inspired should read about Maya Angelou's life.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3/ If visitors to Neolithic Avebury's museum are using virtual headsets, they will feel like they are walking through the henge and stone circles.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4/ If young people today watch Michael Jackson's music videos, they might be not very impressed.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5/ Archaeologists have the choice between several different sites in Europe if they will want to study stone circles.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**EXERCISE 3** Combine the sets

Use a modal and a conjunction to combine the sets of clauses below.

- 1/ you want to enter the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame / you to sell a lot of albums. (if / have to)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2/ anyone tries to lift an Avebury stone / they probably be hurt (if / will)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3/ you keep hope during hardship and persevere over time / you are transformed from a victim into a survivor. (if / will)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4/ you're not wealthy, you are not able to afford Irregular Choice's collections. (if / might)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5/ you're young enough / you enter Avebury for free. (if / can)  
\_\_\_\_\_

How about this for an ad slogan?  
"If you don't like our new product, we'll feel bad."

