ESOL Entry 3 – First Conditional

1 of 18 – Welcome

Welcome to this session on the first conditional.

In this unit, you will learn to use **if** sentences to talk about the future results of possible or probable situations. This is called the first conditional. Don’t worry about the name – it is not important to know it.

By the end of this unit you will be able to:

* Form the first conditional
* Talk about the future results of possible or probable situations
* Use future time clauses in the first conditional
* Make predictions using the first conditional

2 of 18 – Examples of the first conditional

Here are two examples of the first conditional.

**If** I **miss** the bus, I**’ll** be late for work.

**If** I **drink** too much coffee, I **won’t** be able to sleep tonight.

Miss and drink are both verbs. They are both in the **present simple** tense.

I’ll, which means I will, and I won’t, which means I will not, are forms of **will.**

3 of 18 – Key features of the first conditional

In conditional sentences, there are usually two parts, an **if clause** and the other part, which is called **the main clause.**

Take this sentence. **If** I **miss** the bus, I’**ll** be late for work.

**If** I **miss** the bus is the if clause. I**’ll** be late for work is the main clause.

When the **if clause** is at the beginning, we use a comma.

We can swap these two parts around so that the sentence reads like this; I’ll be late for work if I miss the bus. When the **if clause** is second we don’t use a comma.

Also notice that **if** and **will** are in separate parts and that we only use **will** once.

4 of 18 – Looking at patterns

A good way to think about this is to look at some typical patterns:

* **If** I **go**
* **If** you **do**
* **If** it **rains**
* **If** we **don’t**

These patterns sound good.

These patterns don’t sound natural:

* If I will
* If you will
* If it will
* If we won’t

5 of 18 – Why we use will

If + will is an example of a conditional. We call it the first conditional. We use will to talk about the future.

A man walks into a coffee shop and looks at the menu. He says, “I think I will have a café latte, please.” – This is a new decision. The person is speaking and deciding at the same time.

A man walks through a restaurant carrying a big stack of dirty plates. Another staff member sees him and says, “I’ll give you a hand.” – This is a new decision. It is a response to what she sees. It is also an offer.

A girl tells her friend a secret and asks her not to tell anyone. The friend replies, “I won’t tell anyone.” – This is a promise. Won’t is the same as will not. The friend then runs off and tells someone else. The first girl sees them and is very cross. She says, “I’ll kill you!” – This is a threat. We can talk about the result of a possible situation using if + will.

We can describe each of these situations with a sentence.

* If I go to the cafe, I will have a café latte.
* If you’re busy, I will give you a hand.
* If you tell me your secret, I won’t tell anyone.
* If you tell anyone, I’ll kill you.

Notice that we only use will once in each sentence. If and will are not together.

We can also swap the parts. That makes the sentences look like this:

* I will have a café latte if I go to the café.
* I will give you a hand if you’re busy.
* I won’t tell anyone if you tell me your secret.
* I’ll kill you if you tell anyone.

6 of 18 - Question 1

Use these words to complete the sentences below.

* **tell**
* **rains**
* **catch**
* **it’s**
* **see**
* **have**

1. If it [blank] tomorrow, I’ll [blank] the bus to work.
2. We’ll [blank] a barbecue if [blank] nice at the weekend.
3. I’ll [blank] her if I [blank] her.

Remember, we follow this pattern: if + present simply + will or won’t.

The correct answers are:

1. If it **rains** tomorrow, I’ll **catch** the bus to work.
2. We’ll **have** a barbecue if **it’s** nice at the weekend.
3. I’ll **tell** her if I **see** her.

7 of 18 – Question 2

Use these words to complete the sentences below.

* **pay**
* **tell**
* **get**
* **say**
* **are**
* **lend**

1. I won’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a thing if you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ me your secret.
2. If you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ me some money, I’ll \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you back next week.
3. I’ll \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ annoyed if you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ naughty again.

Remember, we follow this pattern: if + present simple + will or won’t.

The correct answers are:

1. I won’t **say** a thing if you **tell** me your secret.
2. If you **lend** me some money, I’ll **pay** you back next week.
3. I’ll **get** annoyed if you **are** naughty again.

8 of 18 – Using can and might

We can replace **will** with some other words, such as **can** and **might**.

**If** it’s nice at the weekend, we **can** go to the beach.

We **might** buy it **if** it’s the right price.

We follow this pattern: if + present simple + will or won’t, can or can’t, might.

9 of 18 – Question 3

Are these sentences grammatically correct or not?

1. If you’re free tomorrow, we’ll go shopping.
2. If I see the dress you like, I’ll get it for you.
3. If you’ll see Alice, what will you do?
4. If you go to the party, who will be there?
5. What will you do if the police stop you?
6. She’ll be upset if she won’t get the job.

The correct answers are:

1. **correct: if** and **will** are not in the same part. We use **if** with present simple.

2. **correct:** **if** and **will** are not in the same part. We use **if** with present simple.

3. **incorrect: if** and **will** are not in the same part: **If you see** Alice, what will you do?

4. **correct: if** and **will** are not in the same part. We use **if** with present simple.

5. **correct: if** and **will** are not in the same part. After **if** use present simple.

6. **incorrect:** **if** and **will** are not in the same part. After **if** use present simple: She’ll be upset if she doesn’t get the job.

10 of 18 – Future time clauses

We don’t always have to use **if**. We can also use ‘*future time clauses*’ such as: **when, after, before** and **as soon as.**

The grammar stays the same as when we use **if**:

**If** you **go out**, I’ll lock the front door.

**When** you **go out**, I’ll lock the front door.

**After** you **go out**, I’ll lock the front door.

**Before** you **go out**, I’ll lock the front door.

**As soon as**you **go out**, I’ll lock the front door.

11 of 18 – Question 4

Which is the best choice to complete this sentence?

**When** [blank] him, I’ll let him know.

1. **I see**
2. **I’ll see**

The correct answer is:

1. When **I see** him, I’ll let him know.

In first conditional sentences, don’t use **when** and **will** together.

12 of 18 – Question 5

Which is the best choice to complete this sentence?

I’ll pay you back **as soon as** [blank].

1. **I’ll get paid**
2. **I get paid**

The correct answer is:

1. I’ll pay you back as soon as **I get paid**.

In first conditional sentences, don’t use **as soon as** and **will** together.

13 of 18 – Question 6

Which is the best choice to complete this sentence?

**Before** [blank] lunch, I’ll go for a quick run.

1. **we have**
2. **we’ll have**

The correct answer is:

1. Before **we have** lunch, I’ll go for a quick run.

In first conditional sentences, don’t use **before and will** together.

14 of 18 - Question 7

Which is the best choice to complete this sentence?

**After** [blank] this, I’ll help you with your work.

1. **I’ll finish**
2. **I finish**

The correct answer is:

1. After **I finish** this, I’ll help you with your work.

In first conditional sentences, don’t use **after and will** together.

15 of 18 - Question 8

Which is the best choice to complete this sentence?

What will you do **when** [blank]?

1. **she finds out**
2. **she’ll find out**

The correct answer is:

1. What will you do when she finds out?

In first conditional sentences, don’t use **when and will** together.

16 of 18 - Writing task

This task is designed to test the writing skills you have learnt in this session. ​​Use the words to make first conditional sentences. You will need to add some extra words and some grammar. There are some helpful hints below if you need them, but you should try to do it on your own first.

1. If / rain / Saturday / the game / be cancelled
2. If / slip on / banana skin / she / fall over
3. As soon as / he / get here / the boss / shout at him
4. When / she / get home / I / start making dinner
5. As soon as / I / get into bed tonight / I / fall asleep
6. It / two days / fix your van / if / start / now

If you need some hints, here is the start of each sentence.

1. If it rains on Saturday, the game…
2. If she slips on the banana skin, she…
3. As soon as he gets here, the boss…
4. When she gets home, I…
5. As soon as I get into bed tonight, I…
6. It will take two days to…

17 of 18 - Reading skills question

Where do you think these pieces of writing come from?

1. If you buy 10 drinks, we’ll give you an extra one for free.
2. If you pay within 28 days, the fee will be reduced by 25% - Ashburne Borough Council.
3. Before the show starts, the lights will be dimmed.
4. If you require any assistance with packing, one of our staff will be pleased to help you.
5. If you stay after 6pm, no charge will be required – Old Lanes Shopping Centre.

Some possible answers are below. Were yours similar?

1. A coffee shop
2. A council fine
3. A theatre
4. A supermarket
5. A car park

18 of 18 - End

Well done. You have completed this session on the first conditional.

You should now:

* Be able to form the first conditional
* Be able to talk about the future results of possible or probable situations
* Use future time clauses in the first conditional
* Be able to make predictions using the first conditional

If you have any questions about anything covered in this session, please speak to your tutor for more help.