Conditional Sentences have two parts: the **IF clause** and the **main clause**:

- If it rains I will stay at home.
- IF Clause       Main Clause

There are different kinds of conditional sentences. Each kind contains a different pair of tenses.

0. **Type 0 (zero conditional) : ‘IF’ + present + another present**
   - Natural facts, general truths. Express automatic or habitual results.
     - E.g. If you heat ice, it turns to water.
   - ‘IF’ + present + imperative - Orders.
     - E.g. If you go out, buy some milk.

1. **Conditional Sentences Type 1: PROBABLE.**
   - The verb in the IF clause is in the present tense; the verb in the main clause is in the future simple. It doesn’t matter which comes first.
     - E.g. If he runs he’ll get there in time.
     - The cat will scratch you if you pull her tail.
   - The action in the IF clause is quite probable.

*Possible Variations:*

- ‘IF’ + present + ‘MAY’ - Possibility / permission.
  - E.g. If the fog gets thicker the plane may be diverted.
  - If the documents are in order you may leave.
- ‘IF’ + present + ‘MUST’ / ‘SHOULD’ Obligation.
  - E.g. If you want to lose weight, you must eat less.
- ‘IF’ + \{ present continuous + ‘WILL’ \} Future. present perfect

2. **Conditional Sentences Type 2: HYPOTHETICAL, IMPROBABLE.**
   - The verb in the ‘IF’ clause is in the past tense; the verb in the main clause is in the conditional tense (‘WOULD’ + verb).
     - E.g. If I had a map, I would lend it to you.

• The past in the ‘IF’ clause is not a real past but a subjunctive. The action in the ‘IF’ clause is a hypothesis, not a real condition.

**Possible Variations:**

- ‘IF’ + past simple + ‘MIGHT’ / ‘COULD’ (instead of would).
  
  E.g. If you tried again you might succeed.
  
  If I knew her number, I could ring her up.

- ‘IF’ + past simple + ‘WOULD BE’ + gerund –ING (continuous).
  
  E.g. If I were on holidays I would be touring Italy.

Note: ‘IF’ [ I/He/She/It ] + ‘WERE’ can be used instead of ‘WAS’ and it is considered the most correct form.

- ‘IF’ + past continuous + ‘WOULD’ + verb.

  past perfect

  E.g. If I were going by boat, I would feel much safer.
  
  If he had taken my advice, he would be a rich man. (2nd not 3rd)

3. **Conditional Sentences Type 3: Impossible.**

• The verb in the IF clause is in the past perfect tense; the verb in the main clause is in the perfect conditional. The condition cannot be fulfilled because the action in the IF clause didn’t happen and is already past.

  E.g. If I had known that you were coming I would have met you at the airport.

**Possible variations:**

- ‘COULD’ / ‘MIGHT’ instead of ‘WOULD’.

  E.g. If we had found him earlier we could have saved his life.

- Continuous perfect conditional. (‘WOULD HAVE BEEN’ + gerund).

- Continuous Past Perfect.

  E.g. If I hadn’t been wearing a belt, I’d have been seriously injured.

‘HAD’ can be placed first and ‘IF’ omitted:

  E.g. Had you obeyed orders, this disaster would not have happened. (If you had obeyed orders...)

IF ALTERNATIVES

‘UNLESS’ + affirmative verb = ‘IF’ + negative.
   E.g. Unless you start at once you’ll be late.

‘PROVIDED’ ['THAT'] .
Can replace ‘IF’ when there is a strong idea of limitation or restriction. It is chiefly used with permission.
   E.g. You can camp here provided you leave no mess.

‘AS LONG AS’
   E.g. You can go out, as long as you phone me.

‘SUPPOSE’ / ‘SUPPOSING’…? = ‘WHAT IF’…?.
   E.g. Suppose the plane is late? = What will happen if the plane is late?

Similar constructions – NOT CONDITIONALS

‘EVEN IF’ = ‘EVEN THOUGH’. (concessive)
   E.g. You must go tomorrow even if you aren’t ready.

‘WHETHER’ … ‘OR’ = ‘IF’ … ‘OR’. (alternative)
   E.g. You must go tomorrow whether you are ready or not.

‘IN CASE’. + present or past tense, or by should. ‘IN CASE’ gives reason not condition.
   E.g. Take an umbrella in case it rains.

   E.g. As soon as I get home, I’ll give you a ring.

EXERCISES

Put in the correct verb forms.
1) If Brian _____________ (to like) horses, he could ride well.
2) They will stay longer in Paris if they _____________ (to find) a cheap hotel.
3) If Alice _____________ (to have) more money, she would go to Africa.
4) If you listened carefully, you _____________ (to know) about it.
5) He can write good stories if he _____________ (to feel) like it.
6) If Steven had taken his camera, he _____________ (to take) nice pictures.
7) John’s mother _____________ (to have) more time for him if he does the washing up.
8) If Sarah _____________ (not/to eat) so much junk food, she could have been in the school hockey team.
9) If you were older, you _____________ (to go) to the party.

Adapted from Thomson & Martinet, A Practical English Grammar, R. Murphy, English Grammar in Use.
10) If the weather had been better, we _______________ (to come) by bike.

Rewrite using conditional sentences:
1. She isn't passing her exams because she isn't studying hard enough.
   ......................................................................................................................
2. I'd like to buy a bigger flat, but I haven't got enough money.
   ......................................................................................................................
3. I never travel by plane because I get ear ache.
   ......................................................................................................................
4. I won't go to the party if you don't go with me. (unless)
   ......................................................................................................................
5. You can attend the meeting as long as you are a club member.
   ......................................................................................................................
6. I'm too busy to go to the pub.
   ......................................................................................................................
7. Ice melts down when you heat it.
   ......................................................................................................................
8. She doesn't understand because you haven't explained the situation to her.
   ......................................................................................................................
9. You won't get a promotion if your work doesn't improve.
   ......................................................................................................................
10. I never eat octopus because I get sick.
    ......................................................................................................................
11. The government won't win the elections unless they create employment.
    ......................................................................................................................
12. I'll buy a new computer provided that I get a rise in salary.
    ......................................................................................................................

Supply if or unless in the following sentences:
1. I'll answer the phone ____ you wish.
2. You won't learn much ____ you work harder.
3. You'll never get a good job ____ you finish college.
4. We won't go out ____ it stops raining.
5. ____ the weather is warm, I can sunbathe in the garden.
6. The won't answer the door ____ you ring three times.
7. ____ we have flu, we stay at home.
8. They certainly won't give you permission to enter ____ you have a pass.
9. We usually walk to school ____ we have enough time.
10. ____ the roofer doesn't come soon, the rain will leak inside.

Rewrite these sentences using the conjunction in brackets:
1. If you (not tell) anyone else, I'll let you in on a secret. (provided that)
2. I can't go to the party if I (find) something suitable to wear. (even if)
3. I could do the crossword puzzle if I (have) a good dictionary. (provided that)
4. You can't have another helping of ice cream if there (be) enough to go around. (even if)
5. We could redecorate our room if the shop (supply) all the wall paper we chose. (on the condition that)
6. If you (lose) all your money, what would you do? (supposing)
7. If you (feel) ill, would you have gone to the concert? (suppose)
8. He can get an interpreter's job if he (study) the language. (provided that)
9. Would you get a good mark if you (make) several spelling mistakes. (even if)
10. If I (be) short of money, would you lend me some? (supposing)

Adapted from :Thomson & Martinet, A Practical English Grammar, R. Murphy, English Grammar in Use.