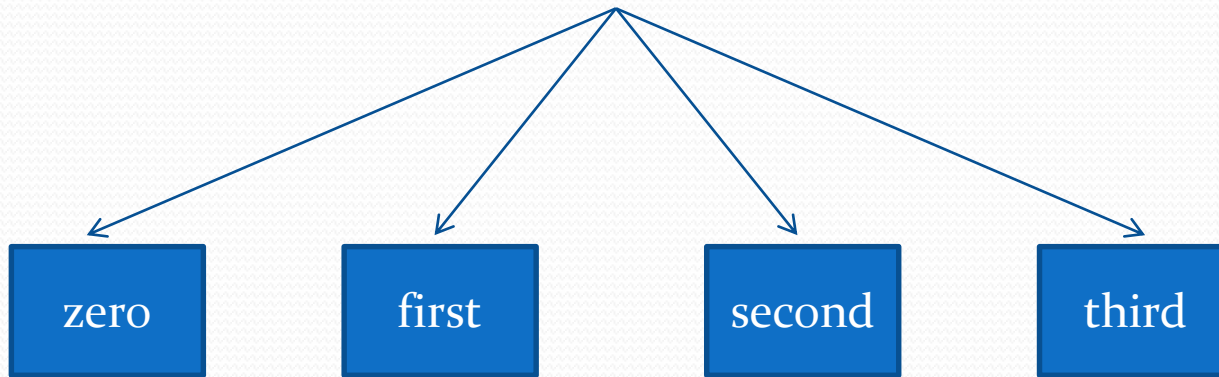


Conditionals

What are conditionals?

- What are conditionals in English grammar? They describe the result of something that might happen (in the present or future) or might have happened but didn't (in the past) . They are made using different English verb tenses.


Kinds of conditionals



Zero conditional



express general truths—situations in which one thing *always* causes another. When you use a zero conditional, you're talking about a general truth rather than a specific instance of something.



If you don't brush your teeth, you get cavities.

When people smoke, their health suffers

Zero conditional

NOTICE!

- 1) When using the zero conditional, the correct tense to use in both clauses is the simple present tense. A common mistake is to use the simple future tense:

~~When people smoke cigarettes, their health will suffer.~~

- 2) The words if and when can be used interchangeably in these zero conditional sentences. This is because the outcome will always be the same, so it doesn't matter "if" or "when" it happens.

First conditional

Expresses situations in which the outcome is likely (but not guaranteed) to happen in the future.



If you rest, you will
feel better



If you set your mind to a goal,
you'll eventually achieve it.

First conditional

Note that we use the simple present tense in the if-clause and simple future tense in the main clause—that is, the clause that expresses the likely outcome.

✘ If you will rest, you will feel better. ✘

✓ If you rest, you will feel better. ✓

First conditional

Use the simple present tense in the if-clause.

X If you set your mind to a goal,
you eventually achieve it. **X**

✓ If you set your mind to a goal,
you'll eventually achieve it. ✓

Use the zero conditional (i.e., simple present + simple present) only when a certain result is guaranteed. If the result is likely, use the first conditional (i.e., simple present + simple future).

Second conditional

useful for expressing outcomes that are completely unrealistic or will *not* likely happen in the future.



If I inherited a billion dollars,
I would travel to the moon.



If I owned a zoo, I
might let people interact
with the animals more.

Second conditional

The correct way to structure second conditional sentences is to use the simple past tense in the if-clause and an auxiliary modal verb (e.g., could, should, would, might) in the main clause (the one that expresses the unrealistic or unlikely outcome).

✘ If I inherit a billion dollars,
I would travel to the moon.

✔ If I inherited a billion dollars,
I would travel to the moon.

Second conditional

When applying the second conditional, use the simple past tense in the if-clause.

✗ • If I owned a zoo, I will let people interact with the animals more. ✗

✓ If I owned a zoo, I might let people
• interact with the animals more. ✓

Use a modal auxiliary verb in the main clause when using the second conditional mood to express the unlikelihood that the result will actually happen.

Third conditional

Third conditional sentences are used to explain that present circumstances would be different if something different had happened in the past.

- If you had told me you needed a ride, I would have left earlier.

I had cleaned the house, I could have gone to the movies.

Third conditional

These sentences express a condition that was likely enough, but did not actually happen in the past. The speaker in the first sentence was capable of leaving early, but did not. Along these same lines, the speaker in the second sentence was capable of cleaning the house, but did not. These are all conditions that were likely, but regrettably did not happen.

Third conditional

X If you would have told me you needed a ride, **X**
I would have left earlier.

✓ If you had told me you needed a ride, ✓
I would have left earlier.

Third conditional

With third conditional sentences, do not use a modal auxiliary verb in the if-clause.



If I had cleaned the house,
I could go to the movies.



If I had cleaned the house,
I could have gone to the movies.



The third conditional mood expresses a situation that could have only happened in the past if a certain condition had been met. That's why we use the modal auxiliary verb + have + the past participle.



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