Conditionals

| Type your information in the space below. |  |
| --- | --- |
| Student Name: | Date: |
| Instructor: | Course: |

# About This DLA

## Important Note

All the activities (3) in the DLA must be completed in their entirety before receiving credit for completion. Students are welcome to meet with a tutor if they need help, but please be aware that students might need a second appointment for review and signature in that case. If your instructor wants evidence of this completed DLA, return this form to him or her with the tutor’s signature included.

## Learning Outcomes

Through computer and other independent work, this activity will familiarize you with and help you create accurate conditional sentences.

## Activities (approximately 1 hour)

Read the information, complete the activities that follow, and be prepared to discuss your answers when you meet with a tutor.

# Understanding Conditionals

Conditional sentences are used to express that the action in the main clause (the result) can only take place if a certain condition (the *if*-clause) is fulfilled. One action depends on something else.

**Real conditionals describe real-life situations.**

Ex🡪I take a nap if I have a headache. (Real)

**Unreal conditionals describe unreal, imaginary situations.**

Ex🡪If I had more time, I would take more classes. (Unreal)

# Structure of Conditional Sentences

A conditional sentence is made up of two clauses: a main clause (the result) and the condition (the *if*-clause). There are two basic ways to form a conditional sentence. Both ways are correct and have the same meaning.

| **Condition (*if*-clause)** | **Result (main clause)** |
| --- | --- |
| If I pass this class, | I will take the upper division course. |
| **Result (main clause)** | **Condition (*if*-clause)** |
| I will take the upper division course | if I pass this class. |

\*Note that you need a comma only when the *if*-clause comes first.

# Zero Conditional: Facts & General Truths

We use the zero conditional when the result of the condition is always true, like scientific facts or general truths. We are not thinking about the future or the past, or even the present. We are thinking about a simple fact. With the zero conditional, the condition always has the same result. You could also use this conditional to give advice, to talk about ability, or to give instructions.

We use **present** **tenses** to talk about the condition. We use the **present tenses, the imperatives, or modals** to talk about the result.

If you **heat** water to 100°C, it **boils**. (simple present)

If you **visit** London, you **should get** an Oyster Card. (modal)

**Buy** tickets online if you **want** to get discounts. (imperative)

The power **goes** out if too many people **are using** a lot of electricity. (present progressive)

# First Conditional: Real Future Possibilities

We are talking about the future. We are thinking about a particular condition or situation in the future, and the result of this condition. There is a real possibility that this condition will happen. We use the simple present tense to talk about the possible condition. The important thing about the first conditional is that **there is a real possibility that the condition will happen**.

We use **simple present** to talk about the condition, and **future tenses or modals of future possibility** to talk about the possible future result.

You **are going to fail** the class if you **don’t do** the work. (certainty)

If you **pass** the exam, I’**ll buy** you dinner. (certainty)

I **may go** to UCLA if I **qualify**. (possibility)

If he **gets** low grades, he **might not get** a scholarship. (possibility)

If you **get** a raise, we **could go** to Hawaii on vacation. (possibility)

# Second Conditional: Untrue or Imaginary Situations

The second conditional can be used to talk about imaginary/impossible present situations, where we are imagining something different from what is really the case. We can also use it to talk about things in the future that are unlikely to happen, as the condition is unlikely to be met.

We use the **past tense** in the condition part and **would/might/could + base** form of the verb for the result.

If I **had** more time, I **would read** more. (certainty) (I don’t have more time, so I don’t read.)

If you **played** the lottery, you **might have** a chance to win. (possibility) (You don’t play, so you can’t win.)

We **could travel** around the world if we **were\*** rich. (ability) (We’re not rich, so we can’t travel.)

\*For present/future unreal conditionals, you should always use *were*, not *was*.

# Third Conditional: Impossible Past

We use the **third conditional** to talk about a condition in the **past** that did **not** happen. That is why there is no possibility for this condition. The third conditional is also like a dream, but with **no possibility** of the dream coming true. The important thing about the third conditional is that both the condition and result were **impossible**.

We use the **past perfect (had + past participle)** tense to talk about the impossible past condition, and **would/could/might + have + past participle** to talk about the impossible past result.

If it **had rained** yesterday, we **would have canceled** the picnic. (It didn’t rain yesterday, so we didn’t cancel the picnic.)

I **could have given** you a ride if I **had known** you needed it. (I didn’t know that you needed a ride, so I didn’t give you one.)

I **might not have bought** this computer if I **had read** its reviews online. (I bought the computer because I didn’t read the reviews.)

# Mixed Conditionals

Sometimes unreal conditional sentences are mixed. This means that the time in the if-clause is not the same as the time in the result. There are many possibilities, but here are a few examples:

| **Past** | **Present** |
| --- | --- |
| If I **had won** the lottery, | I would be rich. |

| **Present** | **Past** |
| --- | --- |
| If I **knew** Mandarin, | I **would have translated** the letter for you. |

| **Future** | **Present** |
| --- | --- |
| If you **were giving** that speech tomorrow, | you **would be** very nervous right now. |

| **Future** | **Past** |
| --- | --- |
| If I **weren’t going** on that trip next week, | I **would have accepted** that new assignment. |

# Using *Unless*

The word **unless** basically means the same thing as **if ... not**.

**Unless** you study, you will fail. = **If** you do **not** study, you will fail.

**Unless** is often used in conditional sentences. It can be used with the zero, first, second, or third conditional. Here are some examples.

**Zero Conditional:** I stay up late unless I have to work early the next morning. = I stay up late **if** I do **not** have to work early the next morning.

**First Conditional:** You'll be unhappy **unless** you break up with her. = You'll be unhappy **if** you do **not** break up with her.

**Second Conditional:** I wouldn't ask her out **unless** you told me it was OK. = I wouldn't ask her out **if** you told me it was **not** OK.

**Third Conditional**: They wouldn't have come over **unless** we'd invited them. = They wouldn't have come over **if** we had **not** invited them.

# Activities

Check off each box once you have completed the activity.

## 1. Review Conditionals

Review the information on this sheet. Then, answer the following questions.

1. What is a conditional sentence?

| Write Answer Here |
| --- |
|  |
|  |

1. What are the four types of conditionals?

| Write Answer Here |
| --- |
|  |
|  |
|  |

## 2. Online Quiz

Go to http://tinyurl.com/ConditionalsDLAQuiz and take the [Conditionals DLA Quiz](http://tinyurl.com/ConditionalsDLAQuiz). You must score at least 80% on the exercises before seeing a tutor. After you complete the task, **PLEASE ASK A LAB TUTOR OR FRONT DESK ATTENDANT TO PRINT THE PAGE THAT HAS YOUR SCORE. DO NOT EXIT THE PROGRAM UNTIL THIS PAGE HAS BEEN PRINTED (FREE OF CHARGE).** If you have any other questions, do not hesitate to ask a lab tutor.

## Choose 3a or 3b Below

## 3a. Practice with Your Own Writing

Collect some of your graded work. Find and write down examples of sentences that contain the following conditionals:

| Type of Conditional | Type your sample sentences below. |
| --- | --- |
| Zero Conditional: |  |
| First Conditional: |  |
| Second Conditional: |  |
| Third Conditional: |  |

**If you do not have your own essay to work with, please complete the supplemental activity below (3b).**

## 3b. Practice with the Sentences Below

Complete the following sentences with their missing conditions or results. Then label the type of conditional (zero, first, second, or third).

| Complete the sentence below. Then label the type of conditional. | Types your answers in the spaces below. |
| --- | --- |
| a. If I **hadn’t come** to the U.S., |  |
| Type of conditional: |  |
| b. | if I **fail** my next exam. |
| Type of conditional: |  |
| c. | if you **need** more grammar practice. |
| Type of conditional: |  |
| d. I **will take** Freshmen Composition unless |  |
| Type of conditional: |  |
| e. | we would stay home. |
| Type of conditional: |  |
| f. | if I **hadn’t taken** this class. |
| Type of conditional: |  |
| g. **Attend** some Writing Center workshops if |  |
| Type of conditional: |  |

## 4. Review the DLA

Go to https://mtsac2.mywconline.com and use the [Mt. SAC Writing Center Appointment System](https://mtsac2.mywconline.com/) to make a DLA appointment, or sign-up to see a tutor on the “**Walk-in**” list in the Writing Center. During your session with a tutor, explain your work to demonstrate your understanding of the four types of conditionals. Refer to your own graded writing (or the completed activity) and explain to the tutor strategies that you used to create conditional sentences.

| Sign and date in the space below. |  |
| --- | --- |
| Student’s signature: | Date: |
| Tutor’s Signature: | Date: |

If you are an individual with a disability and need a greater level of accessibility for any document in The Writing Center or on The Writing Center’s website, please contact the Mt. SAC Accessible Resource Centers for Students, [access@mtsac.edu](mailto:access@mtsac.edu), (909) 274-4290.

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