

97 Zero Conditional and First Conditional

Conditionals and reported speech

1 Look at this:

If + PRESENT SIMPLE + PRESENT SIMPLE
 If I eat too much, I feel bad.

(= Every time I eat too much, I feel bad.)

We use this structure (if + Present Simple + Present Simple) for facts that are generally true. This structure is called the Zero Conditional:

If I don't get enough sleep, I feel tired.

(= Every time I don't get enough sleep, I feel tired.)

If you want to become a doctor, you have to study hard. (= Anyone who wants to become a doctor has to study hard.)

2 We can say the same thing by reversing the two parts of the sentence:

PRESENT SIMPLE + if + PRESENT SIMPLE
 I feel bad if I eat too much.

Note that we do not use a comma (,) before if.

3 Now look at this:

If + PRESENT SIMPLE + WILL/WON'T
 If I'm late, she'll be angry.

(= Perhaps I will be late; then she'll be angry.)

We use this structure (if + Present Simple + will/won't) to talk about things that may happen in the future. The verb after if is Present Simple, but we use it for a possible future action or situation; we use will/won't + verb for the result. This structure is called the First Conditional:

FUTURE POSSIBILITY + RESULT
 If we don't hurry, we won't finish.

4 We can reverse the order:

She'll be angry if I'm late.
We won't finish if we don't hurry.

5 We do not use will/won't after if:

NOT *If I will be late, she'll be angry.*

Practice

A Put these facts about various types of people into sentences with *if + Present Simple + Present Simple*. Make *you* the subject of both parts of the sentence.

- ▶ Doctors treat people who are ill.
 If you're a doctor, you treat people who are ill.
- 1 Vegetarians don't eat meat.
 If you're a vegetarian,
- 2 People who live in a hot country don't like cold weather.
 If you live
- 3 Teachers have to work very hard.
 If you're a teacher,
- 4 People who do a lot of exercise stay fit and healthy.
 If you
- 5 Mechanics understand engines.
 If you're a
- 6 People who read newspapers know what's happening in the world.
 If you

B Complete these sentences with *if + Present Simple + will/won't*, using the words in brackets (). Sometimes you do not need to change the words in brackets.

- ▶ If it rains..... (it/rain), we won't go..... (we/not/go) out.
- 1 If (the weather/be) nice tomorrow, (we/drive) to the coast.
- 2 If (she/post) the letter now, (they/receive) it tomorrow.
- 3 (Fiona/be) angry if (John/arrive) late again.
- 4 (I/go) to their party if (I/have) enough time.
- 5 If (she/not/pass) this exam, (she/not/get) the job that she wants.
- 6 (you/learn) a lot if (you/take) this course.
- 7 If (I/get) a ticket, (I/go) to the concert.
- 8 (I/buy) that camera if (it/not/cost) too much.
- 9 If (you/run) very fast, (you/catch) the bus.
- 10 (I/go) to the doctor's if (I/not/feel) better tomorrow.
- 11 If (they/win) this game, (they/be) the champions.

C Complete the dialogues with the Present Simple or *will/won't* forms of the words in brackets (). Sometimes you do not need to change the words in brackets.

- ▶ A: We must be at the airport at two o'clock.
 B: Well, if we take..... (we/take) a taxi at one o'clock, we won't be..... (we/not/be) late.
- 1 A: I'd like a newspaper.
 B: Well, (I/buy) one for you if (I/go) to the shop later.
- 2 A: Has John phoned yet?
 B: No, and if (he/not/phone) this afternoon, (I/phone) him this evening.
- 3 A: Is Fiona there, please?
 B: No, but if (you/want) to leave a message, (I/give) it to her.
- 4 A: Is Tim going to pass his exam?
 B: Well, (he/fail) if (he/not/work) harder.
- 5 A: Could I have some information about this year's concerts, please?
 B: Yes, if (you/fill in) this form, (I/send) it to you in the post.