144 Conditionals (1)

Vicky and Rachel are talking about possible future actions.

They may catch the bus, or they may miss it.

B Type 1: **If we hurry, we'll catch the bus**

IF-CLAUSE

if Present simple

***If*** *we* ***hurry,***

***If*** *we* ***miss*** *it,*

***If*** *it* ***doesn't rain,***

***If I don't practise*** *my golf,*

MAIN CLAUSE

**Will**

*we 'II catch the bus.*

*there 'II be another one.*

*we 'II be having a picnic.*

*I* ***won't*** *get any better.*

The verb in the if-clause (e.g. **hurry)** is in the present simple, not the future.

NOT *If we'll hurry, we'll catch the bus.* But we can use **will**

in the if-clause when we make a request.

*If you'll just wait a moment, I'll find someone to help you. (-* Please wait a moment...)

We can use the present continuous (e.g. **are doing)** or the present perfect (e.g. **have done)** in the if-clause.

*If we're* ***expecting*** *visitors, the flat will need a good clean. If you've* ***finished*** *with the computer, I'll put*

*it away.*

The main clause often has **will.** But we can use other modal verbs (e.g. **can).** *If*

*you haven't got a television, you* ***can't*** *watch it, can you? If Henry jogs*

*regularly, he* ***might*** *lose weight. If Matthew is going to a job interview, he*

***should*** *wear a tie.*

The if-clause usually comes first, but it can come after the main clause. If I

*hear any news, I'll phone you./I'll phone you* ***if*** *I hear any news.*

C More uses of type 1

We can use type 1 conditionals in offers and suggestions.

*If you need a ticket, I can get you one. If you feel like seeing the sights, we can take a bus tour.* We

can also use them in warnings and threats.

*If you go on like this, you'll make yourself ill. If you don't apologize, I'll never speak to you again.*

**D If you heat water, it boils**

We sometimes use the present simple in both clauses.

*If you* ***heat*** *water, it* ***boils.*** *If Daniel* ***has*** *any money, he* ***spends*** *it.*

*If you* ***press*** *this switch, the computer* ***comes*** *on.*

This means that one thing always follows automatically from another.

Pressing the switch always results in the computer coming on.

145 Conditionals (2)

A Introduction

Rachel: *Would you like some cake, Jessica?*

Jessica: *No thanks. If I* ***ate*** *cake, I'd get fat.*

Rachel: *But it's delicious.*

Jessica: *It looks delicious.* ***Ifl had*** *your figure, I'd eat the whole lot.*

*I ate cake* and / *had your figure* are imaginary or unreal situations.

Jessica isn't going to eat the cake, and she hasn't got a figure like Rachel's.

B Type 2: **If I ate cake, I'd get fat**

IF-CLAUSE MAIN CLAUSE

if Past simple **would**

/// ***ate*** *cake, I 'd get fat.*

***If l had*** *your figure, I 'd eat the whole lot.*

***If*** *we* ***didn't have*** *a car, we* ***'d*** *find it difficult to get about.*

*If Rachel* ***got*** *up earlier, she* ***wouldn't*** *always be late.*

Note the past simple (e.g. **ate).** We do not use **would** in the if-clause. NOT *If I'd-ea^eake.*

But we can use **would** in the if-clause when we make a request.

*If you'd like to come this way, the doctor will see you now.* (= Please come this way ...)

As well as the past simple we can use the past continuous (e.g. **was doing)** in the if-clause.

*If Rachel* ***was playing*** *her stereo, it wouldn't be so quiet in here.* In a type 2 if-clause we

sometimes use **were** instead of was, especially in the clause if I **were you.**

*If Rachel* ***were playing*** *her stereo, it wouldn't be so quiet in here.*

*If I* ***were*** *you, I'd ask a lawyer for some advice.*

The main clause often has **would.** We can also use **could** or **might.**

*If we had a calculator, we* ***could*** *work this out a lot quicker.*

*If Rachel worked harder, she* ***might*** *do even better at her studies.*

The if-clause usually comes first, but it can come after the main clause.

*If I knew, I'd tell you./I'd tell you* ***if*** *I knew.*

C Type 1 and type 2

Compare these examples.

Type 1: *If you* ***have*** *a lie-down, you'll feel better,* (see Unit 144B)

Type 2: *Ifl* ***had*** *a million pounds, I'd probably buy a yacht.*

The present tense **(have)** refers to a possible future action, something which may or may not happen.

The past tense **(had)** refers to something unreal. *If I had a million pounds* means that I haven't really got a

million pounds, but I am imagining that I have. Compare these examples.

Type 1: *If we* ***take*** *the car, we'll have to pay for parking.*

Type 2: *If we* ***took*** *the car, we'd have to pay for parking.*

Here both sentences refer to a possible future action. But in the type 2 conditional, the action is less

probable. *If we took the car may* mean that we have decided not to take it.

We can use type 2 conditionals in offers and suggestions.

*If you needed a ticket, I could get you one.*

*If you felt like seeing the sights, we could take a bus tour.* Type 2 is less direct than type 1 (Unit

144C). The speaker is less sure that you want to see the sights.

146 Conditionals (3)

A Introduction

David: *How was your camping holiday?*

Mike: *Well, it* ***would have*** *been all right*

*if it* ***hadn't rained*** *all the time.*

Harriet: *If we'd* ***gone*** *two weeks earlier,*

*we'd* ***have*** *had better weather.*

*If it hadn't rained* and *if we'd gone two weeks earlier* are imaginary situations in the past. It

did rain, and they didn't go two weeks earlier.

B Type 3: **If we had gone earlier, we would have had better weather**

IF-CLAUSE MAIN CLAUSE

if Past perfect **would have**

*If we 'd* ***gone*** *earlier, we* ***'d have*** *had better weather.*

*If Matthew* ***had phoned*** *her, Emma* ***wouldn't have*** *been so annoyed.*

***If*** *you* ***hadn't made*** *that mistake, you* ***'d have*** *passed your test.*

*If David* ***had been*** *more careful, he* ***wouldn't have*** *fallen.*

Note the verb in the past perfect (e.g. **had been). We do** not use **would** in the if-clause.

NOT *If David would have been more careful, he would have-fallen.*

The main clause often has **would have.** We can also use **could have** or **might have.**

*If I'd had my mobile yesterday, I* ***could have*** *contacted you.*

*We just caught the train. If we'd stopped to buy a paper, we* ***might have*** *missed it.*

The short form 'd can be either **had** or **would.**

*If you'd rung me, I'd have come to see you.* (= If you **had** rung me, I **would** have come to see you.)

C The use of type 3

We use type 3 conditionals to talk about things in the past happening differently from the way they really

happened. This sometimes means criticizing people or pointing out their mistakes.

*If you'd been a bit more careful, you wouldn't have cut yourself.*

*If Matthew had set his alarm clock, he wouldn't have overslept.*

We can also use this structure to express regret about the past.

*If I hadn't fallen ill and missed the interview, I might have got the job.*

D Type 2 and type 3

Compare these examples.

Type 2: *If you* ***planned*** *things properly, you* ***wouldn't*** *get into a mess.* (You don't plan.)

Type 3: *If you* ***had planned*** *things properly, you* ***wouldn't have*** *got into a mess.* (You didn't plan.)

We can mix types 2 and 3.

*If you* ***had planned*** *things at the start, we* ***wouldn't*** *be in this mess now.*

*If you* ***hadn't left*** *all these dirty dishes, the place* ***would*** *look a bit tidier.*

*If Matthew* ***was*** *more sensible, he* ***would have*** *worn a suit to the interview.*

*If I* ***didn't have*** *all this work to do, I* ***would have*** *gone out for the day.*

147 Review of conditionals

There are three main types of conditional. Study the examples.

Type **1: if**... the present simple ... **will/can/might,** etc

*If we win today, we'll go to the top of the league.* (We may win, or we may not.)

Type 2: if ... the past simple ... **would/could/might**

*If Johnson* ***was*** *in the team, I'd feel more confident.* (Johnson isn't in the team.)

Type 3: if ... the past perfect ... **would have/could have/might have**

*If Johnson* ***had*** *played, we'd* ***have*** *won.* (Johnson didn't play.)

Here are some more examples with different verb forms.

Type 1 *If I'm going shopping,* ***I'll*** *need some money.*

*If the disco* ***has*** *finished, we* ***might*** *be able to get some sleep.*

*You* ***should*** *stay in bed if you* ***feel*** *unwell.* Type 2

*If I* ***didn't*** *like this pudding, I* ***wouldn't*** *eat it.*

*If the video recorder* ***was*** *working, we* ***could*** *watch a film.*

*The alarm* ***might*** *go off if we* ***tried*** *to get in through a window.*

Type 3 *If we'd* ***dropped*** *the piano, it* ***would have*** *been a disaster.*

*If Vicky* ***had come*** *to the theme park with us last week, she* ***might have*** *enjoyed it.*

*We* ***could have*** *given you a lift if we'd* ***known*** *you were coming this way.*

Other conditional sentences

As well as the three main types, there are other types of conditional sentence. For

example, we can use two present-tense verbs (see Unit 144D). *If you* ***ring*** *this number,*

*no one* ***answers.***

We can also use a present-tense verb and an imperative. *If you*

***need*** *any help, just* ***ask.*** *If you* ***drink, don't drive.***

**We** can use **be going to.**

***If it's going to*** *rain, I'd better take an umbrella.*

*If they try to cut down the trees, there's* ***going to*** *be a big protest.*

We can mix types 2 and 3 (see Unit 146D).

*If Matthew* ***had booked*** *a table, we* ***wouldn't*** *be standing here in a queue. If*

*you* ***needed*** *help, you* ***should have*** *asked me.*