

CAE MINI LESSON

LET'S LEARN ABOUT:
CONDITIONALS



ZERO CONDITIONAL

We use the zero conditional to express things that are generally or always true (e.g. scientific facts):

If the temperature of water drops to zero degrees, it freezes.

Note: The present simple is usually used in both clauses.

Note: In zero conditional sentences, *when* and *if* are often interchangeable.

FIRST CONDITIONAL

We use the first conditional to express a present or future situation which we think is real or possible:

If the weather improves, we will probably have a barbecue.

The typical structure of first conditional is usually **if + present simple** (condition), **will + infinitive** (result), although other tenses and modals are possible.

If you have finished the exam, you can leave.

If you are feeling unwell, please go and see the nurse.

The following are alternatives, which can be used instead of *if* in first conditional sentences:

when, as long as, unless, as soon as, provided (that), even though, even if, in case, on condition that, in the event of, assuming that, given that

SECOND CONDITIONAL

We use the second conditional to express things which are imaginary/hypothetical, contrary to the facts, impossible or improbable in the present or future:

If I had enough money, I'd buy myself a flat in the centre of town.

The typical structure is **if + past simple and would + infinitive**, but it is possible to use *could* or *might* instead of *would* in the result clause:

If everybody supported the climate change protest, the government might actually pay attention.

THIRD CONDITIONAL

We use the third conditional to express things which are imaginary, contrary to the facts, impossible or improbable in the past. The third conditional expresses the idea of re-imagining what happened in the past:

If I had inherited that money, I'd have invested it in the stock market. (in reality you didn't inherit that money)

The typical structure is **if + past perfect simple, would + have + past participle**, but it is possible to use the past perfect continuous in the *if* clause and *could have* or *might have* in the result clause.

If everybody had supported the climate change protest, the government might actually have paid attention.

The following are alternatives, which can be used instead *if* in second and third conditional sentences and questions:

imagine, supposing, assuming, even if / though

ACTIVITIES

THE TIME MACHINE

ONCE UPON A TIME, A BRILLIANT SCIENTIST NAMED DR. ANDERSON (1) _____ (INVENT) A TIME MACHINE. EXCITED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES, HE (2) _____ (IMAGINE) ALL THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES HE COULD HAVE.

ONE DAY, AS HE (3) _____ (WORK) ON THE FINAL ADJUSTMENTS, HE RECEIVED A MYSTERIOUS LETTER. IT (4) _____ (CONTAIN) DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO PREVENT A MAJOR DISASTER IN THE FUTURE. INTRIGUED, DR. ANDERSON (5) _____ (DECIDE) TO USE HIS TIME MACHINE TO TRAVEL FORWARD AND SEE IF THE EVENTS DESCRIBED (6) _____ (ACTUALLY, HAPPEN).

AS HE (7) _____ (ARRIVE) IN THE FUTURE, HE (8) _____ (BE) ASTONISHED TO WITNESS THE CATASTROPHIC EVENT UNFOLDING. DETERMINED TO CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY, DR. ANDERSON (9) _____ (FOLLOW) THE INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE LETTER METICULOUSLY. HE WONDERED IF ALTERING THE PAST (10) _____ (HAVE) A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE PRESENT.

ANSWERS

ONCE UPON A TIME, A BRILLIANT SCIENTIST NAMED DR. ANDERSON HAD INVENTED (INVENT) A TIME MACHINE.

EXCITED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES, HE IMAGINED (IMAGINE) ALL THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURES HE COULD HAVE.

ONE DAY, AS HE WAS WORKING (WORK) ON THE FINAL ADJUSTMENTS, HE RECEIVED A MYSTERIOUS LETTER.

IT CONTAINED (CONTAIN) DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO PREVENT A MAJOR DISASTER IN THE FUTURE.

INTRIGUED, DR. ANDERSON DECIDED (DECIDE) TO USE HIS TIME MACHINE TO TRAVEL FORWARD AND SEE IF THE EVENTS DESCRIBED WOULD ACTUALLY HAPPEN (ACTUALLY, HAPPEN).

AS HE ARRIVED (ARRIVE) IN THE FUTURE, HE WAS (BE) ASTONISHED TO WITNESS THE CATASTROPHIC EVENT UNFOLDING.

DETERMINED TO CHANGE THE COURSE OF HISTORY, DR. ANDERSON FOLLOWED (FOLLOW) THE INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE LETTER METICULOUSLY.

HE WONDERED IF ALTERING THE PAST WOULD HAVE (HAVE) A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE PRESENT.