

CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

(If I do/did/had done)

Look at these examples:

1. If my colleague studies hard, he will get very high marks.
2. If my colleague studied hard, he would get very high marks.
3. If my colleague had studied hard, he would have got very high marks.

Sentence 1 suggests that it is quite **probable** for my colleague to study hard; it is therefore probable that he will get very high marks in the future. Note that in this type of conditional sentence the verb in the IF-clause ("studies") is in the present tense; the verb in the main clause ("will get") is in the future. (We can also use "may" or "can" instead of "will".)

Sentence 2 suggests that my colleague is not the sort of person to study hard. It is **improbable** that he will study hard, and therefore it is unlikely that he will get very high marks. Note that in this type of conditional sentence the verb in the IF-clause ("studied") is in the simple past tense; the verb in the main clause ("would get") is in the conditional tense. But this sentence, like Sentence 1, refers to the present or future (i.e. if my colleague studied hard now or in the future, he would get....) The past tense form "studied" is **not** a true past tense; it only indicates improbability, unreality, a hypothetical situation, something that we imagine.

Sentence 3 implies that my colleague **did not study hard**, and so he did not get very high marks. This type of conditional sentence refers only to the past; therefore, the condition cannot be fulfilled now. Some grammarians call this type the **impossible** condition. Note that the verb in the IF-clause ("had studied") is in the past perfect tense; the verb in the main clause ("would have got") is in the perfect conditional.

Exercise 29

A. Complete the the following sentences:

1. They will pass their examinations only if they
2. If he listens more carefully, he
3. If the weather is fine, we
4. Will you take part in the seminar if you?
5. We will not go out on a picnic unless

B. Study the situation in each of the following items; then complete the sentence by putting the verbs in parentheses into the appropriate forms:

EXAMPLE: He is not rich, so he cannot afford to buy a luxurious house.

If he (be) rich, he (buy) a luxurious house.

ANSWER: If he were rich, he would buy a luxurious house.

1. The earth is larger than the moon; its gravitational pull is therefore greater than that of the moon.

If the moon (be) larger than the earth, its gravitational pull (be) greater than that of the earth.

2. I do not speak several languages, so I cannot communicate with foreigners from different nationalities.

If I (speak) several languages, I (communicate) with foreigners more efficiently.

3. This exercise is easy, so everyone will get the correct answer.
If this exercise (be) difficult, not everyone (get) the correct answer.

4. Since I know the meaning of the word, I don't have to look it up.
If I (not know) the meaning of the word, I (have) to look it up.

5. Our teacher explains things clearly, so we understand his lectures.

If he (not explain) things clearly, we (not understand) his lectures.

C. Study the situation in each of the following items; then complete the sentence by putting the verbs in parentheses into the appropriate forms;

EXAMPLE: I didn't know his address in Jordan; that's why I didn't send him a postcard yesterday.

If I had known his address in Jordan, I would have sent him a postcard yesterday.

ANSWER: If I had known his address in Jordan, I would have sent him a postcard yesterday.

(OR: Had I known his address in Jordan, I would have sent him....)

1. The patient didn't take the medicine as prescribed by the physician; that's why he didn't feel much better.

If the patient (take) the medicine as prescribed, he (feel) much better.

2. The fire brigade arrived a quarter of an hour late; therefore the fire extended to the neighbouring stores.

If the fire brigade (arrive) a quarter of an hour earlier, the fire (not extend) to the neighbouring stores.

3. I didn't visit you last week as I didn't know you were ill.
I (visit) you last week if I (know) you were not feeling well.
4. As you got up late this morning, you missed the Dawn Prayer.
If you (get) up earlier this morning, you (not miss) the Dawn Prayer.
5. He had a bad education; that is why he behaved so impolitely.
If he (have) a good education, he never (behave) like that.

D. Study the situation in each of the following items; then complete the sentence by putting the verbs in parentheses into the appropriate forms;

1. Some lecturers do not speak loudly enough; that is why not all the audience can hear.
If lecturers (speak) loudly, all the audience (hear).
2. As you didn't explain your problem to me, I wasn't able to help you.
If you (explain) your problem to me, I (be) able to help you.
3. It is probable that the rain will stop soon. In that case, we will go out on an excursion.
If the rain (stop), we
4. First-year students may or may not attend lectures regularly; therefore, they may or may not pass their exams.
Unless first-year students (attend) lectures regularly, they (not pass) their exams.

5. The policeman fortunately showed us the way; therefore, we didn't find difficulty in reaching our destination.

If the policeman (not show) us the way, we (find) difficulty in getting to our destination.

6. That man does not take much exercise, and so he gets fatter and fatter.

If he (take) more exercise, he (not get) so fat.

7. They do not study phonetics; they (understand) phonetic symbols.

If they (study) phonetics, they (understand) phonetic symbols.

8. Nabeel did not put in a lot of effort last semester; that's why he did badly on the exam.

If Nabeel (put in) a lot of effort last semester, he (do) well on the exam.

9. He doesn't listen very carefully; that is why his pronunciation errors are so many.

If he (listen) more attentively, his pronunciation errors (be) fewer.

10. Those students who did not regularly attend lectures failed the exam.

If students (attend) lectures regularly, they (not fail) the exam; they (succeed).