

A2 · TEENS · LESSON 14 · CONDITIONALS 0 & 1

If it rains, I'll stay.

Two tenses, one comma, a whole future of possibilities. English uses *if* for facts that are always true (zero conditional) and for real things that might happen soon (first conditional). Both follow a clean pattern — once you see it, you'll use it every day.

if + present → present

Zero · general truths

if + present → will

First · real future

if + Ø → will

Golden rule: no will after if

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Warm-Up

Cause · Effect · Condition

Cause and effect, in real life...

The word *if* is a magic switch in English. It lets you connect one thing (a condition) to another (a result). Try these four before we begin — say each out loud, finishing the sentence your own way.

1. If I drop my phone on the tiles, it usually **breaks**. (*True for your phone?*)
2. If you mix yellow and blue, you **get** green. (*Any other colour mixes you know?*)
3. If it rains tomorrow, I **will stay** at home. (*What will YOU do if it rains?*)
4. If I don't sleep tonight, I **won't pass** the test. (*What happens if you don't study?*)

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Grammar Focus

Zero & First Conditional

A conditional sentence has **two parts**: the *if-clause* (the condition) and the *main clause* (the result). They are connected by a comma — unless the *if* part comes second, in which case we drop the comma.

At A2, you need two types: **zero** (for things that are *always true* — science, habits, rules) and **first** (for things that *might really happen* in the future). The shape is almost identical; only the result half changes.

ZERO CONDITIONAL · GENERAL TRUTH

If + **present simple** , **present simple** .

"If you **heat** water to 100°C, it **boils**."

FIRST CONDITIONAL · REAL FUTURE

If + **present simple** , **will / won't** + verb.

"If it **rains** tomorrow, we **will stay** home."

USE 1 · ZERO CONDITIONAL — ALWAYS TRUE

Facts, science, rules, habits

Use the zero conditional when a result is **always the same** — every time the condition happens, the result happens. This covers scientific facts, general truths, and personal habits. Both halves stay in *present simple*.

"If you don't water plants, they **die**."

"If my phone rings at night, my cat **jumps** up."

"If the bus is late, I **walk** to school."

USE 2 · FIRST CONDITIONAL — REAL POSSIBILITY

Something that might really happen in the future

Use the first conditional when a future result depends on a **real, possible condition** — the weather, a plan, a decision. The *if* part stays in **present simple** (never *will!*), and the result part takes *will / won't*.

"If I finish my homework early, I'**ll play** games."

"We **won't go** to the park if it snows."

"If you call me tonight, I **will tell** you everything."

ZERO vs. FIRST — THE KEY DIFFERENCE**Always true, or might happen?**

Ask yourself one question: **Is this result always the same?** If yes → zero (present + present). If it only *might* happen in the future → first (present + will).

ZERO · ALWAYS

"If you **press** this button, the light **comes** on."

Every time. Scientific / mechanical fact. Both halves **present simple**.

FIRST · FUTURE

"If you **press** this button later, Mum **will be** angry."

Specific future moment. Not always; just possibly. Main clause uses **will**.

ZERO · HABIT

"If I'**m** tired, I **go** to bed early."

General habit. Not a specific day. Both halves **present**.

FIRST · TONIGHT

"If I'**m** tired tonight, I **will go** to bed early."

About *tonight*, a specific future moment. Use **will**.

△ THE CLASSIC A2 TRAP

Never use *will* in the *if*-clause

In almost every Turkish-to-English translation, learners write "If it *will* rain..." — and it's wrong. The *if*-clause stays in **present simple**, even when you're talking about the future. Only the *main clause* takes *will*.

✗ **WRONG**

"If it *will* rain tomorrow, I *will* stay home."

✓ **CORRECT**

"If it rains tomorrow, I *will* stay home."

✗ **WRONG**

"If you *will* call me, I'll answer."

✓ **CORRECT**

"If you call me, I'll answer."

Key Vocabulary

10 verbs & words for conditional situations

WORD	POS	MEANING	EXAMPLE
freeze	(v)	become ice	<i>If you leave water outside in winter, it freezes.</i>
melt	(v)	become liquid from solid	<i>Ice melts if you put it in the sun.</i>
ring	(v)	produce a bell sound	<i>If the bell rings, we all stand up.</i>
miss (bus)	(v)	not catch / not arrive in time	<i>If I miss the bus, I'll be late.</i>
oversleep	(v)	sleep longer than planned	<i>You'll miss the test if you oversleep.</i>
forget	(v)	fail to remember	<i>If I forget my keys, I'll call mum.</i>
unless	(conj)	if not — opposite condition	<i>I won't come unless you call me.</i>
probably	(adv)	very likely but not certain	<i>If it's hot, I'll probably go swimming.</i>
as soon as	(conj)	immediately after — similar to if	<i>I'll text you as soon as I arrive.</i>
otherwise	(adv)	if not, then this will happen	<i>Study hard, otherwise you'll fail.</i>

IV

Reading

Four decisions, four futures

THE IF ISSUE · VOLUME 14

If, *then*: four real stories

A storm in Lisbon, a test in Seoul, a football match in Rio, a decision in Istanbul. Each one hinges on a tiny word: *if*.

STORY ONE · A STORM EVERY SUMMER

Inês, 14 · Lisbon

Every summer the storms come. Inês has watched them from the same window since she was five. **If the sky goes** very dark, her mum **closes** the big wooden shutters. **If the thunder starts**, the cat **hides** under the sofa. **If the lights go** out, her dad **lights** the old kerosene lamp that smells of summer.

These are not events of any one day. They are rules. They happen every time. "These storms," her grandmother tells her, "have happened since before you were born, and they will happen after you are gone. **If you remember** one thing from your childhood, **remember** this: some things are always the same."

But then, on 14 August last year, Inês did something new. She sat outside on the balcony with a towel over her head and let herself get completely wet. "If I *do it tonight*," she had thought, "I **will remember** this storm for ever." And she has.

ZERO · ALWAYS Most of this story uses the **zero** conditional: "If the sky goes dark, mum closes the shutters." These are general truths, repeated every year. The last paragraph switches to **first** (specific future: *tonight*).

STORY TWO · THE TEST OF THE YEAR

Min-Jun, 17 · Seoul

Min-Jun's biggest test, the *suneung*, is in two weeks. The whole country quiets down on test day — even airplanes are grounded during the listening section. He has prepared for three years. "**If I pass**," he tells his sister, "**I'll go** to my first choice of university, and **I'll celebrate** for a week. **If I don't pass**, **I'll try** again next year."

His mother brings him tea and hot rice. "**If you don't sleep** tonight," she says gently, "you **won't do well** tomorrow. And **if you don't eat** breakfast, you **won't think clearly** in the first hour."

Min-Jun smiles. "And **if you keep bringing** me tea every five minutes," he jokes, "**I'll never finish** this chapter." But he drinks the tea anyway. He *has* to sleep. He *has* to pass. Everything, for him, starts with *if*.

FIRST · REAL FUTURE Notice: every single *if*-clause is in **present simple**, even though Min-Jun is talking about the future. The *will* only appears in the **main clause**. Exactly the A2 pattern.

STORY THREE · THE FINAL FIVE MINUTES

Gabriel, 15 · Rio de Janeiro

The final. Five minutes left. 1—1. Gabriel stands on his roof with his neighbours, the whole street holding its breath. "**If we score**," his uncle says, "the whole favela **will explode**. **If they score**, we **won't sleep** for a week."

A pass. A cross. Another pass. Gabriel's hand goes to his mouth. Number 10 takes it past the defender. "**If he shoots now...**" Gabriel whispers — and he doesn't finish. Number 10 shoots.

Goal. The street doesn't explode. It detonates. Gabriel falls to his knees on the hot concrete roof, laughing. "**Unless we lose** in extra time," his uncle shouts over the noise, "we **will be** champions!" They do not lose. And Gabriel later says that *that* was the night he understood what *if* really means.

FIRST + UNLESS "*Unless we lose*" = "*If we don't lose*". Remember: **unless** means **if not**, and it's always followed by a positive verb. "Unless I sleep" = "If I don't sleep."

STORY FOUR · A DECISION AT MIDNIGHT

Selin, 16 · Istanbul

Selin has three weeks to decide. Her aunt has offered her a summer in Berlin — a language school, a host family, her first time abroad. Her mother says no. Her father says her mother's word is final. Selin sits on her balcony at midnight and thinks about *if*.

"**If I go**," she writes in her notebook, "**I'll learn** German. **I'll meet** new people. **I'll miss** my mother, but **I'll grow up** faster."

"**If I stay**," she writes below, "**I'll be** safer. **I'll have** the same summer as every year. **I won't learn** German. I *might* regret it."

"**If I don't decide** tonight," she writes last, underlined twice, "I *ll regret it* either way." She closes the notebook. Tomorrow, she will tell her mother. She already knows the answer.

FIRST · WEIGHING OPTIONS A classic teenage use: first conditional as a **thinking tool**. By writing "if I go..." next to "if I stay...", Selin imagines two possible futures, and the pattern helps her compare them side by side.



Practice

Fill the blanks with the correct form

Choose the correct form for each sentence. Coloured tags indicate which part of the conditional or which rule to apply.

LEGEND: IF-CLAUSE MAIN CLAUSE ZERO NEGATIVE ⚠ TRAP

1. If it ____ tomorrow, we will cancel the picnic. **IF-CLAUSE**
 A will rain B rains C rained
2. If I finish my homework, I ____ watch a film. **MAIN CLAUSE**
 A watch B watched C will
3. If you heat ice, it _____. **ZERO**
 A melts B will melt C melted
4. She ____ late if the traffic is bad. **MAIN CLAUSE**
 A is B was C will be
5. If we don't leave now, we ____ the train. **NEGATIVE**
 A don't catch B won't catch C didn't catch
6. Which sentence is correct? **⚠ TRAP**
 A If it will snow, we'll build a snowman. B If it snows, we'll build a snowman. C If it snows, we build a snowman tomorrow.
7. If my phone _____, I can't call you. **ZERO**
 A will die B died C dies
8. _____ you help me, I'll help you tomorrow. **IF-CLAUSE**
 A If B Unless C Will

VI

Speaking

Five hypothetical situations

What *will* you do if...?

ASK A PARTNER — MAKE FULL SENTENCES

Answer each prompt in a **full first-conditional sentence**. Try to add a reason: "If ..., I'll ... because ...".

1. What will you do if it *rains heavily* this weekend?
2. If you *win* 1,000 Turkish lira tomorrow, what will you buy first?
3. If your best friend *forgets* your birthday, how will you react?
4. If you *don't pass* your next English test, what will you do?
5. If your family *moves* to another country next year, will you be happy or sad?

MODEL DIALOGUE — WEEKEND PLANS

A: "What *will* you do if it rains this weekend?"

B: "If it rains, I *'ll stay* home and watch a film."

A: "I hate staying in. If it *rains*, I *'ll probably go* to the café with Ayşe."

B: "And if it *doesn't rain*?"

A: "Then we *'ll go* cycling! If you *come* with us, it *will be* even better."



Writing

Two plans for next weekend (80-120 words)

Choose the correct zero conditional:

- A If water boils, it will turn into steam.
- B If water will boil, it turns into steam.
- C If water boils, it turns into steam.
- D If water boiled, it turns into steam.

Q2 OF 8 · FIRST CONDITIONAL

Complete: "If I ____ time tomorrow, I will call you."

- A will have
- B have
- C had
- D am having

Q3 OF 8 · THE TRAP

Which sentence is *incorrect*?

- A If she studies, she'll pass.
- B She'll pass if she studies.
- C If it's sunny, we'll go to the beach.
- D If it will be sunny, we'll go to the beach.

Q4 OF 8 · NEGATIVE

"If you don't hurry, you ____ the train."

- A will miss
- B miss
- C are missing
- D missed

Q5 OF 8 · READING RECALL

In Story One, what does Inês's mum do when the sky goes dark?

- A She calls the neighbours.
- B She hides under the sofa.
- C She closes the big wooden shutters.
- D She lights a kerosene lamp.

Q6 OF 8 · UNLESS

"I won't go ____ you come with me." (= if you don't come)

- A if
- B unless
- C when
- D will

Q7 OF 8 · WORD ORDER

Which punctuation is correct?

- A I'll call you if I arrive late.
- B I'll call you, if I arrive late.
- C If I arrive late I'll call you.
- D I'll, call you if I arrive late.

Q8 OF 8 · ZERO OR FIRST?

"If the bell ____ at 8:30 tomorrow, the test will start."

- A will ring
- B rang
- C rings
- D is ringing

Answer Key

PRACTICE (PART VI)

1. B 2. C 3. A 4. C 5. B 6. B 7. C 8. A

QUIZ (PART IX)

Q1. C Q2. B Q3. D Q4. A Q5. C Q6. B Q7. A Q8. C