Conditionals & Wishes

A **Conditional Sentence** directly expresses cause and effect. These sentences contain a **condition** usually marked by the word "if" (e.g., "If you practice…") and a **result** (e.g., "…you will improve"). The **condition** can come before the **result** (e.g., "*If you practice*, you will improve") or after the **result** (e.g., "You will improve *if you practice*").

Wishes set up a desire for something to be true that currently is not true (e.g., "I *wish* the weather were warm today, but it is cold"). This resource will show you the proper grammar for conditionals and wishes.

Zero Conditional: Always True

Zero conditional sentences express a condition and a result that are always true. These sentences will often contain a clause starting with the word "if," "when," or "whenever." If the action is happening in the present, use Simple Present Tense. If the action was happening in the past, use Simple Past Tense.

Examples:

1. *When* I *go* to church, I always *wear* nice shoes.
2. *Whenever* I *scored* a goal, the crowd *cheered*.
3. She always *brought* cookies *when* she *visited* her sister.

First Conditional: Likely To Happen

First conditional sentences express conditions that are likely to happen. The condition in a first conditional sentence starts with "if" and is written in a form of present tense (i.e., "If you go to the store…"), while the result is written in a form of future tense (i.e., "…then I will cook dinner").

Examples:

1. *If* the weather *is* still good, I *will walk* to school.
2. We *will start* the meeting without him *if* he *is running* late.
3. If you *don't hurry*, you *will miss* your plane.

SECOND CONDITIONAL: NOT TRUE

Second conditional sentences express conditions in the present or future that are not true. The condition begins with "if" and is written in simple past tense or past progressive tense. The result includes "would," "could," or "might" and is written in simple present tense. Note: When using a "to be" verb, use "were" rather than "was."

EXAMPLES:

1. *If* the tests *were* easier, the students *might pass* them.

2. *If* you *owned* a car, you *could drive* to school.

3. I *would be* very happy if I *were eating* ice cream right now.

THIRD CONDITIONAL: DID NOT HAPPEN

Third Conditional Sentences express actions in the past that did not actually happen. In these sentences, the Condition uses the word "if" and is written in either past perfect tense or past perfect progressive tense. The result uses "would have," "could have," or "might have" followed by the past participle of the verb.

EXAMPLES:

1. *If* I *had walked* to school, I *would have been* late.

2. *If* the students *had been studying* last night, they *could have earned* a better grade.

3. You *might have won* the game *if* you *had played* differently.

"WISH" AS A VERB: DESCRIBES UNREAL CONDITIONS

The verb "wish" is used to express the desire that current conditions were different. The grammar for wishes can be tricky, because the verb tense does not match the time of the wish. Use the chart below to master wishes!

Situation	Verb Alteration	Wishing for Condition
It didn't work before.	Past time -> past perfect tense	I wish it *had worked*.
It doesn't work now.	Present time -> past tense	I wish it *worked* now.
It will not work tomorrow.	Future time -> present tense	I wish it *works* tomorrow.

PRACTICE NOW