

Conditional sentences

(author: Dorota Horowska)

This idea:

Paul trains hard so he wins competitions.

can be put into the following conditional sentences:

0 conditional (scientific principles, rules of behaviour, facts always true)

Tenses: present simple and present simple; no IF; popular: WHENEVER

Whenever Paul trains hard, he wins competitions.

I conditional (type I) (situations possible and likely to happen in the future)

Tenses: future simple – IF – present simple

Paul will win this competition if he trains hard.

Variations popular with this sentence type:

Paul should/can/may win this competition if he trains hard. (czasownik modalny zamiast “would”)

Train hard Paul if you want to win this competition!!! (tryb rozkazujący zamiast “would”)

II conditional (type II) (situations possible, but not sure to happen OR impossible)

Tenses: would and verb – IF – past simple

Paul would win competitions easily if he trained hard(er).

If I were Paul, I would train harder in order to win competitions easily. (situation impossible because you cannot be another person)

Variations popular with this sentence type:

Paul could/should win competitions easily if he trained hard(er). (czasownik modalny zamiast “would”)

III conditional (type III) (situations impossible = only speculation about the past, often feeling sorry about the way things went)

Tenses: would have and verb (3rd form) – IF – past perfect

Paul would have won the competition if he had worked hard(er).

Variations popular with this sentence type:

Paul could have won the competition if he had worked hard(er).

Mixed conditional sentences: type II and type III (used to say how past influences some present behaviour OR how our personal qualities or habits influenced some past behaviour)

Tenses: would have and verb (3rd form) (type III) – IF – past simple (type II)

If Paul was/were more determined and hard-working, he would have won the competition.

OR would and verb (type II) – IF – past perfect (type III)

Paul could win the next competition easily if he had trained much harder to prepare for it.

Inversion in conditional sentences

Conditional sentences where this structure is used DO NOT contain IF.

Type I (tzw. inwersja polega na zastosowaniu SHOULD; znaczenie takiego zdania często (ale nie zawsze) sprowadza się do: gdybyś przypadkiem)

Should you choose science or engineering studies, you will probably end up in a better-paid job.

Type II (forma “you = ty” występuje zarówno z “were” jak i “was”)

Were I/ Were she/ Was she better qualified, I/she would apply for the job advertised.

Were I you,/ Were I in your/her position, I would not risk travelling by train now.

Type III

Had we known you were coming, we would have found you much better accommodation.

Alternatives to IF

If it hadn't been for / But for his numerous interruptions, the meeting would have finished much earlier.
If it hadn't been for his injury / But for his injury, we would have won the match.

Suppose / Supposing you had met the president, what would you have asked him?

Suppose / Supposing you missed this flight, what would you do?

!!! Sentences using this alternative to IF are in fact questions.

You may borrow the items from the toolbox **on (the) condition that / provided that / as long as you** return them the following day.

As long as / Provided that / On (the) condition that a child is well looked after and read to at home, they will do much better at school than children who aren't.

There are several factors to consider when deciding **whether or not** to go to university.

Assuming that everything goes according to plan, I will graduate in 4 years' time.

I cannot do part-time studies **unless** my employer agrees to fund them.

!!! The clause (part of the sentence) that follows “unless” must not contain any form of negation.