

Conditional Sentences 1:

Introduction

Conditional sentences are usually made up of two components: the IF clause and the THEN clause. In most cases it is possible to begin a sentence either with the if-clause or the then-clause, depending on what the speaker is trying to emphasise, the condition or the consequences.

There are four different types of conditionals in English, but in this lesson we will only look at three of them. The types of conditionals are distinguished by the tense of the verbs and the probability of the event occurring:

Here is a little chart to help you to visualize the basic English conditionals. Do not take the 50% and 10% figures too literally. They are just to help you.

| probability | | conditional | example | time |
|-------------|-------|--------------------|--|------------------|
| 100% | ----- | zero conditional | If you heat ice, it melts. | any time, always |
| 50% | ----- | first conditional | If it rains, I will stay at home. | future |
| 10% | - | second conditional | If I won the lottery, I would buy a car. | future |
| 0% | | third conditional | If I had won the lottery, I would have bought a car. | past |

There are no interactive exercises for this section