

English B1 · Conditionals

Intermediate English for Chinese speakers; classroom examples, not official exam items.

The verbs show how real the world is

The verbs step backwards to show unreality: present for facts, will for a real future, the past costume for an imagined world.

Zero: the laws of the universe

If + present, present

If you heat ice, it melts.

If I drink coffee at night, I don't sleep.

Your turn: a law

Your turn

If you heat ice, it ____.

- A. will melt
- B. melts
- C. would melt
- D. melted

First: the real future

- 1 **The pattern** If + present simple, will + base verb.
- 2 **The example** If it rains tomorrow, we'll stay home.
- 3 **The gate** if is a time gate: never if it will rain.

Decision

Real possibility, real plan: if-side present, result-side will.

Your turn: at the gate

Your turn

If it ____ tomorrow, we'll stay home.

- A. will rain
- B. rains
- C. would rain
- D. rained

Second: the imagined world

If + past, would + base

If I were a bird, I would fly to school. — I am not a bird.

If I won the lottery, I would buy my teacher a holiday.

— If I were you, I would study more.

Your turn: the costume

Your turn

If I ____ you, I would bring an umbrella.

- ☐ A. am
- ☐ B. was
- ☐ C. were
- ☐ D. would be

The honest choice of worlds

first — possible

If I have time, I'll help you.

A real possibility; help may happen.

second — imaginary

If I had time, I'd help you.

I don't have time, and we both know it.

Say it aloud

Zero: If I don't sleep, I can't think. A law of the universe.



First: If the weekend is sunny, we'll go cycling.



Second: If I were the head teacher, I would cancel Mondays.



Advice swap: If I were you, I'd bring an umbrella. Now advise me back.

Check yourself

- If you heat ice, it melts — a law: zero conditional.
- If it rains tomorrow, we'll stay home — a real future: first.
- If I were you, I would study more — an imagined world: second.
- Never if it will rain, never if I would win — the gates and the costumes.