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if, when, unless and in case

After **if**, **when**, **unless** and **in case** we use the present tense to talk about the future:

- You'll get a prize **if** you win. Tell me **when** the kettle boils.
I won't do it **unless** you agree. Write it down **in case** you forget it.

A if or when?

Compare:

We use **if** to say that something might possibly happen:

If you hear any news, can you let me know immediately?

(You **might** hear some news.)

*I'll probably go for a walk later on **if** it stays fine.*

(It **might** stay fine.)

We use **if** (not **when**) to talk about something impossible or imaginary:

***If** I was in your shoes, I'd do the same.*

NOT *~~When I was in your shoes, I'd do the same.~~*

If and **when** have similar meanings in contexts where **when** means 'every time':

***If** you run, you use up energy. OR **When** you run, you use up energy.*

B if and unless

If ... **not** means the same as **unless**. Compare:

*I can't see **if** I don't wear glasses.*

*The doctor will be here **if** she isn't called to an emergency.*

***If** you can't pay your bills now, you'll have to leave.*

*I wouldn't ride a bike **if** I didn't have a helmet on.*

*I can't see **unless** I wear glasses.*

*The doctor will be here **unless** she's called to an emergency.*

***Unless** you can pay your bills now, you'll have to leave.*

*I wouldn't ride a bike **unless** I had a helmet on.*

C in case

Look at these examples:

*I'll write down the address **in case** I forget it.*

*Take a sandwich with you **in case** you get hungry.*

*I'd better reserve a seat today **in case** the train is full tomorrow.*

*I took two photos **in case** one of them didn't come out.*

We use **in case** to talk about doing something because something else might happen later.

Compare **if** and **in case**:

*I'll bring in the washing **if** it rains.*

(I'll bring it in after it starts raining.)

*I'll bring in the washing **in case** it rains.*

(I'll bring it in now because it might rain later.)

116 Exercises

116.1 if or when? (A)

Complete the sentences using **if** or **when** and a present-tense verb.

- I may see Danny tonight. *If I see him*, I'll tell him the news.
- Mark is coming soon. *When he comes*, can you let him in?
- 1 The alarm will ring soon. _____ we all have to leave the building.
- 2 I might feel better tomorrow. _____ I'll probably go back to work.
- 3 This programme finishes at ten. _____ I'll stop the video.
- 4 I'm taking a photo in a minute. _____ I want everyone to smile.
- 5 The plan may not work. _____ we'll have to think of something else.

116.2 if and unless (B)

Rewrite the **if**-clauses using **unless**.

- You won't get there in time *unless you hurry*. (if you don't hurry)
- 1 We can't have a picnic _____ (if it isn't a nice day)
- 2 Don't leave the TV on _____ (if you aren't watching it)
- 3 We can't do the job _____ (if we don't get help)
- 4 I won't wake up _____ (if I don't use an alarm clock)
- 5 I wouldn't buy the picture _____ (if I didn't like it)

116.3 if and unless (B)

Put **in if** or **unless**.

- Mike will be pleased *if* he passes his test.
- The bus won't stop *unless* you ring the bell.
- 1 I can't read your letters _____ you type them.
- 2 Ann will be upset _____ she doesn't get the job.
- 3 You can't go into the theatre _____ you've got a ticket.
- 4 Don't bother to ring me _____ it's important.
- 5 I'd go to the concert _____ I wasn't so busy.

116.4 in case (C)

Combine each pair of sentences using **in case**.

- You'd better take a sweater. It might get cold.
You'd better take a sweater in case it gets cold.
- 1 We'd better book a table. The restaurant might be full.
- 2 You ought to insure your jewellery. It might get stolen.
- 3 I'm watching this saucepan. The water might boil over.
- 4 I'll leave you my phone number. You might want to contact me.

Conditional sentences

Fill the gaps

1. If you (WANT) to lose weight, you (MODAL-EAT) less bread
2. If you (SEE) Peter tomorrow, (MODAL-ASK) him to phone me, please?
3. If you (ALREADY-FINISH) dinner, I (ASK) the waiter to for the bill.
4. I (POST) the letter if he (FINISH) it, but he's still writing it.
5. If I (LEAVE) nearer my office, I (BE) in time for work, but I live rather far.
6. If you (PRESS) that button, the alarm (GO) off.
7. If I (DYE) my hair blue, everybody (LAUGH) at me.
8. I know you are very disappointed, but I'm sure if you (TRY) again you (SUCCEED)
9. If I (SEE) you yesterday, I (TELL) you, but I didn't see you !!
10. If the Spanish kings (NOT HELP) Columbus, he (NOT SAIL) to discover America.

Substitute "if". Use "UNLESS / PROVIDED (THAT) / ON CONDITION (THAT)

1. You can camp here if you leave no mess
2. If you don't start at once, you'll be late
3. If you don't have a permit, you won't be able to get a job
4. Call me only if you need help. (Don't)
5. You can borrow my car only if you return it as clean as it is now

Situations : Rewrite the following sentences

1. I didn't know Jack was ill, so I didn't go to the hospital to visit him
2. I would like to go for a walk, but it is raining cats and dogs out there.
3. I don't live near the sea, that's why I haven't got a boat to sail on at weekends
4. You didn't try harder, that's why you failed
5. Leaving now, you're in good time to catch the train.
6. I can't buy that house because I haven't got enough money.

CONDITIONAL STRUCTURES

I.- WORDS OTHER THAN "IF"

Conditionals can also be introduced by the following conjunctions:

| | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| unless | even if | assuming that | as/so long as |
| if only | on condition (that) | provided/providing (that) | |
| IN QUESTIONS → suppose/supposing (that) | | what if | imagine |

Rewrite the following sentences using the MOST appropriate conjunction:

- 1.-Mr Lynne says he'll come and give us a talk if we pay him a reasonable fee.
- 2.- I won't help him if he doesn't ask me properly
- 3.-Life would be perfect if I could get that job
- 4.-If you had a lot of money, do you think you'd give up work?
- 5.-If the train arrives on time, they'll be here in a few minutes
- 6.-If she doesn't agree to my request, what will I do then?
- 7.-You can throw that party if everything is tidied up by midnight
- 8.-If the helicopter hadn't been there to save her, what would have happened?
- 9.-If you'd offered me a thousand pounds, I wouldn't have done it
- 10.-If I get that promotion, I'll have plenty of money for a new car.

II.-OTHER STRUCTURES : "BUT FOR.../ IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR..."

Rewrite the following sentences

- 1.- The rescue team arrived on time, so the injured saved their lives.
- 2.-My parents gave me some money, which enabled me to buy this flat
- 3.-Hadn't you helped me, I would still be here trying to mend this puncture.
- 4.-Fortunately my dogs were there, so the burglar got the hell out of my house
- 5.-Luckily John had a spare key, so we got home despite having lost my key ring.

- 3 If you put your money in a savings account, you (get) ten per cent interest.
- 4 If the microphone isn't working, you (can not) hear what he's saying.
- 5 The radio (not work) if the batteries are flat.
- 6 If there (be) only a few students, we usually close one of the classes.
- 7 The machine (not work) if it doesn't have enough oil.
- 8 If a balloon is filled with hot air, it (rise).
- 9 If water (boil), it changes into steam.
- 10 The machine stops automatically if something (go) wrong.

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Words other than **if**

- Other words can be used instead of **if** in conditional clauses:
 - a) **unless** = 'if not':

I'll go home soon if the film doesn't start.
I'll go home soon unless the film starts.
 - b) **provided (that); on condition (that), as long as, so long as:**

Provided that everybody agrees, we'll have the meeting on Tuesday.
 - c) **(just) suppose, supposing (that), what if, imagine:**

Just suppose it didn't rain for four months: would we have enough water?

The words are not always interchangeable. Their use depends on the context of the sentence.

Choose the correct word or words to replace the words in italics in these sentences:

- 1 'I'll give you £100 *if* you say nothing about this.' (provided that, what if, unless)
I'll give you £100 provided that you say nothing about this.'
- 2 '*If* your company went bankrupt, what would you do?' (just suppose, on condition, as long as)
- 3 '*If* you had to live in another country, where would you go?' (on condition, unless, imagine)
- 4 'We'll let him out of prison *if* he reports to the police station every day.' (supposing, as long as, unless)
- 5 'I'll take them to court *if* they *don't* pay me what they owe.' (imagine, provided that, unless)
- 6 '*If* you won a million pounds – what would you do with it?' (providing, as long as, unless, imagine)
- 7 '*If* they keep to the agreement, I'll give them the money.' (what if, imagine, so long as)
- 8 'You'll be alright *if* you take some travellers' cheques.' (provided that, imagine, what if)
- 9 'I'll complain to the manager *if* you *don't* give me a different room.' (as long as, unless, imagine)