

LESSON 15

Conditionals

The word 'if' expresses condition. When we combine it with verbs in different tenses, there arise a number of situations which express different types of conditions. Look to four such situations

1. If + simple present + will.
2. If + simple past + would/ could/ should/ might.
3. If + I were + would.
4. If + past perfect + would have + past participle.

(i) If + simple present + will

When the structure is of the type, if + simple present + future, it means the event mentioned in the sentence is possible and may take place in the near future.

- (i) If I find your bag, I'll bring it.
- (ii) If I see her, I'll pass on your message.
- (iii) If it rains, I'll stay back.
- (iv) If I see her, I'll call her here.
- (v) If they agree, I'll bring them with me.

(ii) If + simple past + would/ could/ should/ might

When the structure is of the type, if + simple past + would, the event mentioned in the sentence is imaginary and will probably not happen. For example, in the sentence, 'If I got one thousand gold coins, I'd live like a king.', when the speaker says '**If I got**' it means he does not have any coins at present. The speaker is imagining the situation; But remember, 'if' is not used in a 'would' clause. That is, it is incorrect to say, 'If you would control your diet you would lose weight'. We should say 'If you controlled your diet, you would lose weight'.

Examples:

- (i) If I drank a lot of water in the summer, I'd not feel sick.
- (ii) If you ate the junk food in excess, you'd grow obese.
- (iii) If the train reached on time we would reach home before dark.
- (iv) If you knew stenography, the company would select you.
- (v) If you were not so obstinate, things could be different.

(iii) if I were + I would

The same idea can be expressed by using the structure, 'If I were + would'.

Example:

- (i) If I were a doctor, I would help the poor.
- (ii) If I were you, I wouldn't buy a car.
- (iii) If it were not to rain today, I would go for a walk.
- (iv) I would live in Agra, if things were better.
- (v) If I were the authority, I'd solve the traffic problem.
- (vi) If I were a doctor, I'd treat the poor free.

(iv) if + past perfect + would have + past participle

When the structure is, If + past perfect + would have + past participle, the situation that arises expresses a completed action. For example in the sentence, *If I knew Garima's phone number I would call her immediately* (in this sentence, the verb 'knew' is in the simple past tense but it refers to an action in the present, that is, I cannot ring Garima (now) because I do not have her phone number). **But**, in the sentence, *If I had known Garima's phone number I would have called her immediately*, 'had known' is in its *past perfect* form and refers to a completed action, that is, I could not ring Garima because I did not have her phone number.

Example:

- (i) If Sonu *had* time he *would* study more. (action in present)
If I had known Sonu had more time, I *would have made* him study more. (completed action)
- (ii) If I *knew* he was a cheat. I *would* turn him out. (action in present)
If I *had* known he was a cheat I *would have turned* him out. (completed action).
- (iii) If I *saw* you I *would* stop the car. (action in present)
If I *had* seen you, I *would have stopped* the car. (completed action)

Exercise 1

Complete the following sentences putting the pairs of given verbs in their correct form as in the example:

If younot study properly you (do, fail)
If you did not study properly you would fail this time.

- (i) If we in remote countryside we'd need a private transport. (live)
- (ii) If we had the choice we mother home from hospital. (bring)
- (iii) If we the truth no one us to go again. (tell, allow)

- (iv) If I this ring also the gift too much. (give, cost)
- (v) If I for promotion they me in remote areas.
(ask, post)
- (vi) If you this contaminated food you sick. (eat, fall)
- (vii) If mothers educated, society fast . (be, develop)
- (viii) If the house well it good feeling. (clean, give)

Exercise 2

Complete the following sentences as in the example:

You are feeling sick.....(drink, water).

You are feeling sick. If you took lot of water you would feel better.

- (i) If you ate a lot of fatty food with no exercise(obese).
- (ii) Would you mind (use, your car).
- (iii) If the global warming increased(water, scarce).
- (iv) The company would select you (know, stenography).
- (v) If you were not so obstinate (things, different).
- (vi) If I were a doctor (treat, poor free).
- (vii) Would you go for shopping even (rain, stop).
- (viii) The world would collapse (population, rise).

Exercise 3

Complete the given exercise. Follow the example.

Imagine the situation and ask your younger brother/sister what he/she would do if his/her boss troubled every day.

If my boss troubled me, I would resign and go.

(i) If you are given rupees 10,000 to spend what would you do?

.....

(ii) If there is an earthquake and you see an invalid in the adjoining balcony.

.....

(iii) If your car fails in the middle of the road and you are getting late for the meeting.

.....

(iv) You are a teacher and your students are refusing to study.

.....

(v) Somebody bribes you and asks for favour.

.....

Exercise 4

Follow the example and complete the following sentences: Take the clue from the words given in parenthesis:

Example:

If there had been no fog. (no accident).

If there had been no fog the accident would not have taken place.

(i) If he had not over eaten. (fall sick)

(ii) If the team spirit had been strong. (India not defeated)

(iii) If the sun had been shining brightly. (wheat ready for harvesting)

(iv) If the weather was not so bad (go for shopping)

(v) If I had worked harder. (better result)

Exercise 5

Imagine the situation and complete the sentences as in the example:

You knew the answer to the first question but you attempted the other question and failed.
If I had attempted the first question, I wouldn't have failed.

- (i) Your father told you not to go for driving. It started raining and you were left alone in the dark.

.....

- (ii) You have purchased two bed covers. Now you are regretting because they are of poor quality and your money is wasted.

.....

- (iii) Mothers in India are not educated. They teach wrong things to children.

.....

- (iv) There is no population control. It is causing all problems.....

.....

- (v) You went to attend the marriage of you brother but you forgot to take your new dress. You felt embarrassed.

.....

Answers to Exercise 1

(i) lived (ii) would bring (iii) told, would allow (iv) gave, would cost (v) asked, would post (vi) ate, would fall (vii) were, would develop (viii) was cleaned, would give.

Answers to Exercise 2

- (i)you would become obese.
(ii)if I used your car.
(iii)there would be water scarcity.
(iv)if you knew stenography.
(v)things could be / might be / would be different.

- (vi)I would treat the poor without charging anything.
- (vii)if it stopped raining.
- (viii)if the population rose at this rate.

Answers to Exercise 3

These answers are only suggestive. Learners can have their own answers only that the pattern given should be followed.

- (i) If I were given 10,000 rupees I would help the poor.
- (ii) If there was an earthquake and I saw an invalid in the adjoining balcony I would try to help him.
- (iii) If my car failed in the middle of the road I would ask for a lift or hire a taxi.
- (iv) If my students refused to study I would try to find the reason for it.
- (v) If someone bribed me I would refuse and admonish him.

Answers to Exercise 4

- (ii) If I had not over eaten I would not have fallen sick.
- (iii) If there had been team spirit, India would have won.
- (iv) If the sun had been stronger the wheat would have been ready for harvesting by now.
- (v) If the weather was not so bad I would have gone for shopping.
- (vi) If I had worked harder I would have got better result.

Answers to Exercise 5

- (i) If I had listened to my father I wouldn't have been left alone in the dark when it started raining.
- (ii) If I had not taken two bed covers of bad quality I would have saved my money.
- (iii) If mothers in India were educated they wouldn't have taught wrong things to their children.
- (iv) If the population had been controlled, so many problems wouldn't have come up .
- (v) I wouldn't have felt embarrassed if I had taken my proper dresses

Negative Conditionals

Unless, But for

Unless

'Unless' expresses negative condition. Study the following sentences and compare:

I'll give Sonal the money if she needs it.

I'll not give the money to Sonal unless she needs it.

Examples:

- (i) Surat cannot get a good percentage *unless* she works hard.
- (ii) I'm sorry I can't send the letter through you *unless* I'm instructed by the manager.
- (iii) You cannot reach in time *unless* you drive fast.
- (iv) We cannot sell the goods *unless* instructed.
- (v) The fruits cannot be distributed *unless* the principal orders.

But for

When conditions are hypothetical we use '**but for**'.

Examples:

- (i) *But for* the money you gave, I would have gone hungry. (i.e. if you had not given the money I would have remained hungry.)
- (ii) *But for* Soami we would have lost the game.
- (iii) *But for* the help your mother gave, we could not have finished cooking.
- (iv) *But for* the heat the trip was enjoyable.