

# The Zero Conditional

Conditionals in English are sentence structures that we use to talk about **results, causes, possibilities or hypothetical situations**. They usually have two parts:

- **Condition (if-clause)** → the situation
- **Result (main clause)** → what happens because of that situation

## How do we use and make the Zero Conditional in English?

**Use:** things that are always true (general truths, scientific facts, habits)

**Structure:**

If + present simple, present simple

**For example:**

- If **I eat** too much sugar, **I feel** sick.
- If **it rains**, **the ground gets** wet.
- If **you heat** ice, **it melts**.
- If **you don't water** plants, **they die**.
- If **I wake up** late, **I don't go** for a run.
- If **she is** stressed, **she listens** to music.

You can put the **main clause first if you want**. We often do this if we want to emphasise the result. When we do this, we do not usually use a comma.

For example:

- **I feel** sick if **I eat** too much sugar.
- **The ground gets** wet if **it rains**.

## When

Sometimes we can replace "if" with "**when**" and the meaning stays the same.

For example:

- **When** I eat too much sugar, I feel sick.
- The ground gets wet **when** it rains.

## Unless

We can also use "**unless**" instead of "if", but the meaning is different. "Unless" basically means "if not".

For example:

- **Unless** you water plants, they die. (= If you don't water plants, they die.)
- I go for a run **unless** I wake up late. (= I go for a run if I don't wake up late.)

## Questions

We can use the zero conditional in **questions** as well.

For example:

- **Do you feel** sick if you eat too much sugar?
  - If you eat too much sugar, **do you feel** sick?
  - **Does the ground get** wet when it rains?
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## Comparisons

The zero conditional and first conditional are similar, but not exactly the same. We use **the zero conditional if something always happens or usually happens**. We use the **first conditional if something will likely happen on this specific occasion**.

Compare:

|                          |   |                            |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Zero Conditional</b>  | If I'm late, <b>my boss gets</b> angry.     | always or usually true     |
| <b>First Conditional</b> | If I'm late, <b>my boss will get</b> angry. | real possibility this time |

**!** Often people use the first conditional instead of the zero conditional, even if technically the zero conditional is more correct.

For example:

- If **you heat** ice, **it will melt**.

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## Spanish and Portuguese Translations

**En:** If Frank studies, he passes his exams.

**Sp:** Si Frank estudia, aprueba sus exámenes.

**Pt:** Se Frank estuda, ele passa nos exames.