

## The Conditional Tenses in English

 in conjunction with Talk to the Monkey!

*Conditionals* are sentences with two clauses – an 'if clause and a main clause. There are **four main conditionals** that are commonly used in the English language: **zero** conditional, **first** conditional, **second** conditional and **third** conditional.

### Zero Conditional

We use the **zero conditional** to talk about things that are **always true**:

**If/when + simple present..., simple present...**

The English monkey says...

- 👉 **When you write** a new word down, **you remember** it more easily
- 👉 **If you practice**, **you improve**.

### First Conditional

We use the first conditional to talk about **real and possible** situations. The first conditional uses the **if/then** structure and the words **will, shall, can or may** to convey the *future* action being considered.

**If + present simple..., will, shall, may, can + infinitive.**

The English monkey says...

- 👉 **If you read** this tutorial until the end, **you will** be very knowledgeable on the condition tenses in English.
- 👉 **If you practice** your English diligently every day, **you may** be mistaken for a native speaker one day!
- 👉 You **shall** really improve your listening, **if you watch** films and TV series in English.
- 👉 **If you don't understand** a word, **you can** always consult your friendly dictionary!



### Second Conditional

In some ways it is similar to the first conditional. It uses the same structure, but instead of using the words **will, shall, can, or may**, the second conditional uses **would, could, or might**.

We use the **second conditional** to talk about **unreal but not physically impossible** situation; they *could* happen.

If + past simple..., would, could, might + infinitive.

The English monkey says...

- 🍌 If I **had** a million dollars, I **might** buy a house in NYC and live there 6 months a year.
- 🍌 If I **spent** six months a year in NYC, I **would** be fluent in English.
- 🍌 If I **became** president, I **could** improve the English taught in French schools!

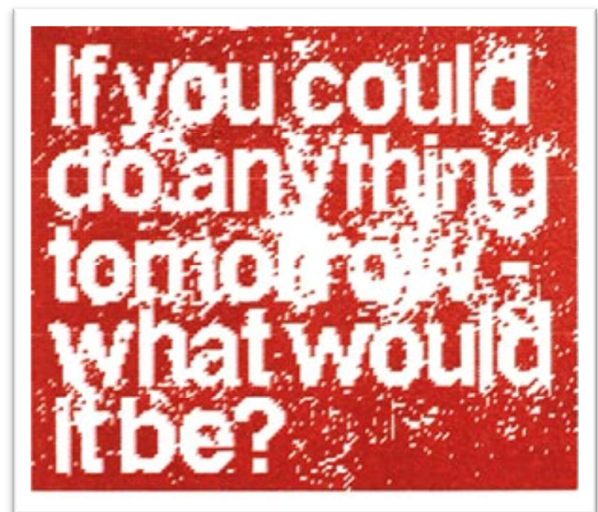
### Third Conditional

While the first and second conditionals talk about possible future events, the third conditional deals with the **past**.

The third conditional talks about events in the past and the **effects** of those **past events not happening**. It uses the words **would/could/might have** to convey these impossible events.

If... + past perfect (had + past participle)..., would/could/might have + past participle

- 🍌 If I **hadn't read** this interesting tutorial, I **might have remained** ignorant about the conditional tenses for years to come.
- 🍌 If I **had bought** a lottery ticket, I **could have won** the jackpot and bought an apartment in NYC.
- 🍌 If I **had started** learning English at the age of 3, I **would have** been fluent a long time ago.



Let's look at **the difference** between the **first, second** and **third conditionals**.

**You are planning to buy the house:** If I can get more money together, I'll buy that apartment in Brooklyn!

**Buying the house is virtually impossible:** If I won the lottery, I would buy that apartment in Brooklyn!

**It is now impossible to buy the house (too late):** If I had won the lottery, I could have bought that house in Brooklyn!