

# Lesson Plan: Exploring Conditionals – Real and Unreal Situations

Student Level: Intermediate (B1-B2)

Length of Lesson: 45 minutes

Language Area: Conditionals (Zero, First, Second)

## 1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Accurately identify and differentiate between Zero, First, and Second Conditional sentences.
- Form grammatically correct Zero, First, and Second Conditional sentences.
- Use Zero, First, and Second Conditionals appropriately to discuss general truths, real possibilities, and hypothetical situations.

## 2. Materials

- Whiteboard or projector
- Markers or pens
- Handouts with exercises (optional, but recommended for controlled practice)
- Flashcards or slips of paper for activities
- Internet access for resource links (if applicable)

## 3. Procedure

### 3.1. Warm-up: "What If...?" (5 minutes)

Activity: Begin by writing "What if...?" on the board. Ask students a few open-ended "What if...?" questions related to everyday life or common knowledge. For instance:

- "What if it rains tomorrow?"
- "What if you don't eat for a day?"
- "What if you found a forgotten twenty-dollar bill?"

Encourage students to brainstorm answers. Write down some of their responses, even if grammatically imperfect at this stage.

Pedagogical Support for Intermediate Learners:

- Engagement First: Focus on getting students to speak freely and activate any existing knowledge of conditional ideas. Don't correct grammar strictly during this warm-up to maintain a low-stress environment.
- Concept Activation: This activity helps to naturally introduce the idea of cause and effect, and potential outcomes, which is the core of conditionals.

- Reference: For more warm-up ideas, general ESL lesson plans often include engaging starts, such as those found on [teflcourse.net](http://teflcourse.net)'s lesson plan on conditionals .

### 3.2. Presentation: Understanding Conditional Types (15 minutes)

Activity: Explain the structure and usage of Zero, First, and Second Conditionals. Use clear examples and contrast them.

- Introduction to Conditional Structure: Explain that conditional sentences typically consist of two clauses: an "if clause" (the condition) and a "main clause" (the result). Emphasize that the order can be switched without changing the meaning, but a comma is used when the "if clause" comes first (e.g., "If it rains, I'll stay home." vs. "I'll stay home if it rains.").
- Zero Conditional (Facts & General Truths):
  - Form: If + Simple Present, Simple Present
  - Use: To talk about things that are always true, scientific facts, or general habits.
  - Examples: "If you heat water to 100 degrees Celsius, it boils." "If I eat too much, I get sick."
  - Pedagogical Support: Highlight that "when" can often replace "if" in this type. Provide very simple, undeniable examples that students can easily grasp.
  - Resource: A clear explanation of the Zero Conditional is available on [Grammarly](http://Grammarly.com) .
- First Conditional (Real & Possible Future Situations):
  - Form: If + Simple Present, will + Base Verb (Other modals like 'can' or 'might' can also be used in the result clause for varying degrees of certainty).
  - Use: To talk about future situations that are possible and likely to happen.
  - Examples: "If it rains tomorrow, we will stay home." "If you study hard, you will pass the exam."
  - Pedagogical Support: Address the common error of using "will" in the "if" clause (e.g., "If it will rain..." is incorrect). Use a simple timeline drawing on the board to visually represent the future possibility. Introduce other conjunctions like "unless," "as long as," or "as soon as" as alternatives to "if."
  - Resource: Espresso English provides a concise explanation of the First Conditional .
- Second Conditional (Unreal/Hypothetical Present/Future Situations):
  - Form: If + Simple Past, would + Base Verb (Other modals like 'could' or 'might' can be used in the result clause).
  - Use: To talk about hypothetical or unlikely situations in the present or future, or to give advice.
  - Examples: "If I won the lottery, I would buy a big house." "If I were you, I would quit smoking."
  - Pedagogical Support: Emphasize that the simple past tense in the "if" clause does not refer to past time; it signals the unreal or hypothetical nature. Crucially, explain the use of "were" for all subjects (I, he, she, it) in the "if" clause for formal correctness (e.g., "If I were you..."), noting that "was" is often used informally.
  - Resource: For a clear guide on the Second Conditional, including common nuances, refer to [Perfect English Grammar](http://PerfectEnglishGrammar.com) .

Overall Pedagogical Support for Presentation:

- Visual Aids: Utilize a whiteboard or projector to clearly display sentence structures and examples. Consider drawing simple diagrams (e.g., timelines for the First Conditional to show future possibility vs. the Second Conditional's present/future unreality).
- Contrastive Analysis: Regularly compare and contrast the different conditional types to highlight their specific uses and forms. For instance, directly compare "If I win ..." (First Conditional) with "If I won ..." (Second

Conditional).

- Concept Checking Questions (CCQs): After explaining each conditional, ask targeted questions to ensure understanding (e.g., "Is this situation real or imaginary?" "Does this happen every time or in the future?").
- Elicitation: Encourage students to provide their own simple examples after each explanation.

### 3.3. Controlled Practice (15 minutes)

#### Activity 1: Sentence Completion (7 minutes)

Description: Provide incomplete conditional sentences for students to finish individually or in pairs.

Examples:

- "If I study hard, I \_\_\_\_\_." (First Conditional)
- "If you heat water, it \_\_\_\_\_." (Zero Conditional)
- "If I had a million dollars, I \_\_\_\_\_." (Second Conditional)
- "If she doesn't hurry, she \_\_\_\_\_." (First Conditional)
- "If I were an animal, I \_\_\_\_\_." (Second Conditional)

Pedagogical Support for Intermediate Learners:

- Focus on Accuracy: This stage is crucial for solidifying the grammatical forms. Circulate around the room, providing immediate and constructive feedback on verb tenses and clause structure.
- Sentence Starters: Provide clear sentence beginnings to guide students towards the correct conditional type.
- Peer-Checking: After individual work, allow students to compare answers with a partner before a whole-class review.

Resource: Perfect English Grammar offers various sentence completion exercises.

#### Activity 2: Matching Halves (8 minutes)

Description: Prepare two sets of cards or list two columns on the board/handout: one with "if" clauses and another with corresponding "main" clauses for Zero, First, and Second Conditionals. Students match them to create logical and grammatically correct sentences.

Example "if" clauses: "If you touch a hot stove," "If it snows tomorrow," "If I had more free time,"

Example "main" clauses: "you get burned.", "I would learn a new skill.", "we'll build a snowman."

Pedagogical Support for Intermediate Learners:

- Reinforce Logic and Grammar: This activity encourages students to think about both the grammatical structure and the logical connection between condition and result.
- Variety of Conditionals: Include a mix of Zero, First, and Second conditionals to ensure broad practice.
- Self-Correction: If using cards, students can physically manipulate them, which can aid in self-correction.

Resources:

- British Council LearnEnglish has interactive exercises for Zero, First, and Second Conditionals, which can be adapted for matching.
- Teach-This.com also offers various ESL activities and worksheets for conditionals, including matching exercises.

### 3.4. Freer Practice / Production (7 minutes)

#### Activity: Conditional Chain Story (Written or Spoken)

Description: Students collaboratively build a story using conditional sentences.

- Option A (Written): Students work in small groups. One student starts a conditional sentence (e.g., "If I had a superpower, I would fly."). The next student writes a new conditional sentence, using the result of the previous sentence as their new "if" clause (e.g., "If I flew, I would visit the moon."). Papers are folded to show only the last sentence and passed around.
- Option B (Spoken): In small groups or as a whole class, one student says a conditional sentence. The next student orally continues the story by forming a new conditional sentence, building on the previous one.

Focus: Encourage the use of the Second Conditional for this activity to promote imaginative storytelling (e.g., "If I were an astronaut, I would...").

Pedagogical Support for Intermediate Learners:

- Encourage Fluency over Perfection: At this stage, the primary goal is to encourage spontaneous language use. Gently correct major errors that significantly impede meaning, but avoid interrupting the flow.
- Creativity and Imagination: Prompt students to be imaginative. Humorous and absurd scenarios often lead to greater engagement.
- Sentence Starters/Prompts: Provide a few initial prompts to kickstart the stories (e.g., "If I woke up with a new skill today...", "If money were no object...", "If I could change one thing about my city...").

Resources:

- A detailed guide for a Conditional Chain Story activity is available on [eslactive.com](http://eslactive.com).
- ESL Brains offers lesson plans, including one on "What if cars could fly?" for practicing Second Conditional discussions.
- For general speaking activities: ESL Speaking Activities for Conditionals from [eflideas.com](http://eflideas.com).

### 3.5. Wrap-up & Homework (3 minutes)

#### Activity: Quick Review & Personalized Homework

- Review: Briefly recap the main characteristics and structures of Zero, First, and Second Conditionals (e.g., "Zero for facts, First for possible future, Second for imaginary situations"). Ask students for one example of each type.
- Homework: Assign students to write 3-5 conditional sentences for each of the three types discussed (Zero, First, Second) about their own life, dreams, or future plans.

Pedagogical Support for Intermediate Learners:

- Clear Instructions: Ensure homework instructions are explicit and students understand what is expected.

- Personalization: Encouraging students to write about their own lives makes the grammar more meaningful and increases engagement.
- Reinforcement: Homework provides an opportunity for independent practice and consolidation of the learned structures.

Resources:

- ESL Conditionals Homework for Intermediate Students from Magoosh offers a comprehensive set of exercises, including creating personal sentences.
- British Council LearnEnglish also provides downloadable worksheets that can be used for homework.