

# Conditionals

English Grammar · B1

## Conditionals

| First                          | Second                            |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| real future                    | unreal now                        |
| <i>If it rains, we'll stay</i> | <i>If I were rich, I'd travel</i> |

Conditionals: reference card grid

- **Zero Conditional** (general truths): If + , .
- **First Conditional** (future possibilities): If + , will + .

If you heat water, it boils.

*If you heat water, it boils. (General truth)*

If it rains, we will stay in.

*If it rains, we will stay at home. (Possible future)*

**Note** Use the **simple present tense** in the if-clause, even when referring to the future: ~~If it will rain~~ × → If it rains ✓.

## Second Conditional

The **Second Conditional** describes hypothetical situations regarding the **present** or **future that are unreal or unlikely**:

**Structure:** If + , would +

If I had a lot of money, I would travel.

*If I had a lot of money, I would travel. (But I don't actually)*

**Note** In the Second Conditional, the verb be is typically standardized as **were**: *If I were you, I would rest. (If I were you, I would rest.)*

## unless

**unless** means “**except if / if ... not**”, equivalent to **if ... not**:

You will be late unless you hurry.

*You'll be late unless you hurry. (= if you don't hurry)*

**Note** unless already contains a negative meaning, so **do not add not** afterwards: ~~unless you don't hurry~~ ×.

## Common Errors

- × ~~If I would be rich, I would travel.~~ → ✓ If I **were** rich, I would travel. — would appears only in the main clause; use the past tense in the if-clause.
- × ~~If it rains, we would stay home.~~ → ✓ If it rains, we **will** stay home. / If it **rained**, we **would** stay home. — Do not mix First and Second Conditionals; the entire sentence must follow one pattern.
- × ~~If I was you, I would rest.~~ → While heard in spoken English, use ✓ If I **were** you for exams and writing.
- Comma Rule: If the if-clause comes **before**, add a comma (If it rains\*\*,\*\* we stay in.); if it comes **after**, no comma is needed (We stay in if it rains.).