

Guide to Forming the Verb Phrase in Conditional Sentences
Factual Conditional Sentences: FORMING THE VERB OR VERB PHRASE

1. To express a future possibility or make a prediction

Condition Clause

Present tense
Present progressive tense
Present perfect tense

Result Clause

will, can, should, could, may, might + base form

Examples:

If countries do not conserve their resources, they will regret it later.
If Andreas is telephoning me right now, he will get a busy signal.

***Note:** A conditional sentence with the modal *will* expresses the strongest possibility, a prediction. The other modals indicate a lesser degree of possibility.

Examples:

If you have not bought your ticket, you may not get a seat.
If Mina is not attending class regularly, she could fail the course.
If the letter has not come by now, it might not arrive at all.

2. To express a general fact or a habitual action

Condition Clause

Same tense

Result Clause

same tense

Examples:

If a caterpillar matures, it becomes a chrysalis. (fact)
Whenever my roommate studied late, I stayed up too. (habitual action)

***Note:** *When* and *whenever* are often used instead of *if* to express a habitual action.

3. To make an inference

Condition Clause

Present tense
Past tense

Result Clause

must or should + base form
must have + past participle

Examples:

If the store is already closed, it must be later than we thought.
If Nam really did lose his wallet instead of misplacing it, he must have felt very nervous.

4. To give a command or instructions

Condition Clause

Present tense
Past tense
Present perfect tense

Result Clause

imperative

Examples:

If you miss the lecture, go to see the teacher.
If you missed the lecture, go to see the teacher.
If you have missed the lecture, go to see the teacher.

Guide to Forming the Verb Phrase in Conditional Sentences
Hypothetical Conditional Sentences: FORMING THE VERB OR VERB PHRASE

1. To express a present or future hypothetical or contrary-to-fact situation

***Note:** In the condition clause, when the simple past form or the past progressive form is used, *were* is used for all forms of *be*.

Condition Clause

Simple past form

Result Clause

would, could, might + base form

would, could, might + base form + *ing*

Past progressive form

would, could, might + base form

would, could, might + base form + *ing*

Could, would + base form

would, could, might + base form

Examples:

If I were you, I would save more money.

If Gabriel lived at home instead of in the dormitory, he would have a quiet place to study.

If Mona cleaned up her apartment every week, she would not always be complaining about how messy it is.

If Sheila were not working in the dining hall, she could not afford college.

If Mike could find his library card, he would start his term paper.

***Note:** In the example sentences above, *were to* + a preposition may be used for the simple past form of the verb, as in *If Gabriel were to live at home* or *If Mona were to clean her apartment every week*.

2. To express a hypothetical situation in the past

Condition Clause

Past perfect form

Result Clause

would, could, might + have + past participle

would, could, might + have + been + base form + *ing*

Past perfect progressive form

would, could, might + have + past participle

would, could, might + have + been + base form + *ing*

Examples:

If Gail had turned her lab report in on time, she would have received the full ten points on it.

If Lana had not refused to lend us his car, we could have been driving to the beach right now.

Natasha might have enjoyed the movie if she had not been concentrating so hard on understanding what the actors were saying.

If Carmen had been paying attention in class, he would not have been asking his friends how to do the assignment last night.