

# 144 Conditionals (1)

## 1 Introduction



Vicky and Rachel are talking about possible future actions. They may catch the bus, or they may miss it.

## 2 First Conditional: If we hurry, we'll catch the bus

IF-CLAUSE	MAIN CLAUSE
If + PRESENT SIMPLE	+ will
If we <b>hurry</b> ,	we <b>'ll</b> catch the bus.
If we <b>miss it</b> ,	there <b>'ll</b> be another one.
If it <b>doesn't rain</b> ,	we <b>'ll</b> be having a picnic.
If I <b>don't practise my golf</b> ,	I <b>won't</b> get any better.

The verb in the if-clause (e.g. **hurry**) is in the Present Simple, not the future.

NOT ~~If we'll hurry, we'll catch the bus.~~

But we can use **will** in the if-clause when we make a request.

*If you'll just wait a moment, I'll find someone to help you.* (= Please wait a moment ...)

We can use the Present Continuous (e.g. **are doing**) or the Present Perfect (e.g. **have done**) in the if-clause.

*If we're expecting visitors, the flat will need a good clean.*

*If you've finished with the computer, I'll put it away.*

The main clause often has **will**. But we can use other modal verbs (e.g. **can**).

*If you haven't got a television, you **can't** watch it, can you?*

*If Henry jogs regularly, he **might** lose weight.*

*If Matthew is going to a job interview, he **should** wear a tie.*

The if-clause usually comes first, but it can come after the main clause.

*I'll phone you **if** I hear any news.*

## 3 More uses of the First Conditional

We can use First Conditionals in offers and suggestions.

*If you need a ticket, I can get you one. If you feel like seeing the sights, we can take a bus tour.*

We can also use them in warnings and threats.

*If you go on like this, you'll make yourself ill. If you don't apologize, I'll never speak to you again.*

## 4 If you heat water, it boils

We sometimes use the Present Simple in both clauses.

*If you **heat** water, it **boils**. If Daniel **has** any money, he **spends** it.*

*If you **press** this switch, the computer **comes** on.*

This means that one thing always follows automatically from another.

Pressing the switch always results in the computer coming on.

# Practice

## A First Conditional (1–3)

Read the conversation and then choose the correct forms.

Rachel: Have you heard about the pop festival?

Vicky: Yes, (▶) it's/it'll be good if Express are playing. They're a great band.

Rachel: Will you be able to go, Nick?

Nick: If (1) I ask/I'll ask my boss, he'll give me some time off work, I expect.

Vicky: How are we going to get there?

Rachel: Well, if (2) there are/there'll be enough people, we can hire a minibus.

Vicky: I won't be going if (3) it's/it'll be too expensive.

Rachel: It (4) isn't costing/won't cost much if we all (5) share/will share the cost.

Nick: If (6) I see/I'll see the others later on tonight, (7) I ask/I'll ask them if they want to go.

## B First Conditional (1–3)

Comment on the situations. Use *if* + the present tense + *will/can*.

▶ It might rain. If it does, everyone can eat inside.

If it rains, everyone can eat inside.

▶ The children mustn't go near Nick's dog. It'll bite them.

If the children go near Nick's dog, it'll bite them.

1 Rachel might fail her driving test. But she can take it again.

2 United might lose. If they do, Tom will be upset.

3 The office may be closed. In that case Mark won't be able to get in.

4 Nick may arrive a bit early. If he does, he can help Tom to get things ready.

5 The party might go on all night. If it does, no one will want to do any work tomorrow.

6 Emma may miss the train. But she can get the next one.

7 Is Matthew going to enter the race? He'll probably win it.

## C Present Simple in both clauses (4)

Match the sentences and join them with *if*.

▶ You lose your credit card. I can't sleep.

1 You get promoted. You get a warning letter.

2 I drink coffee late at night. You have to ring the bank.

3 You don't pay the bill. Your salary goes up.

4 I try to run fast. The alarm goes off.

5 Someone enters the building. I get out of breath.

▶ If you lose your credit card, you have to ring the bank.

- 1 .....
- 2 .....
- 3 .....
- 4 .....
- 5 .....