



# Chapter 20

## Conditional Sentences and Wishes

### CHAPTER SUMMARY

**OBJECTIVE:** Conditional sentences are among the most useful forms for communicating suppositions about events or situations that are contrary to reality. Students who learn to form these clauses correctly will add a very important dimension to their ability to understand and use English in order to communicate complex information in both speech and writing.

**APPROACH:** Since verb forms are used for distinctions of meanings in conditional sentences, the chapter begins with a summary of their use in presenting factual and contrary-to-fact information. Then variations in conditional sentences are introduced, including the use of *as if* and *as though*. The chapter ends with a unit on expressing wishes. Many of the exercises in this chapter provide opportunities for students to communicate their own ideas.

**TERMINOLOGY:** An *if*-clause is also called a “clause of condition.”

**CHART 20-1.** Overview of Basic Verb Forms Used in Conditional Sentences. Page 416  
Time: 10–15 minutes

This chart summarizes the information in the next three charts. It is helpful to have a wall chart or transparency of these verb forms for you to point to and for students to refer to during discussion of the exercises. When information about using progressives and other modals is introduced in later charts, this basic chart can be expanded to include them.

It is assumed that students are somewhat familiar with conditional sentences. You might introduce this chapter with an oral exercise in which you ask leading questions:

*What would you do if there were a fire in this room?*

*What would you have done if you hadn't come to class today?*

*What would you do if I asked you to stand on your head in the middle of the classroom?*

*If you were a bird / cat / mouse, etc., how would you spend your days? Etc.*

Some students may think that conditional sentences are odd and unimportant. Assure them that conditionals are extremely common in daily conversation as well as in writing. Mastering conditionals will help students communicate in a variety of situations, and you should emphasize their everyday use with your students (even by modeling, using conditionals as content: *If you don't learn to use conditionals, you will be unable to speak naturally in everyday situations.*) Conditionals are the only way to express some ideas. You might mention that one situation in which they are especially common is sports broadcasting. For example:

*If the catcher hadn't struck out, the Red Sox would have won the World Series.*

- Write the chart title on the board.
- Tell students that understanding and using conditionals is extremely important for their general use of English, particularly when speaking.
- Explain that much of what we humans like to talk about is “unreal.” People love to talk about what will happen in certain cases, what could happen in the future, and what could have happened but didn't. Stress that without understanding and being able to use conditionals, students can't participate in these natural speech functions.
- Remind students that they have probably already studied and used very simple conditionals, and write an *if*-clause on the board that they can turn into a full sentence, such as:  
*If I learn English very well, I \_\_\_\_.*
- Ask students for a variety of completions in the correct tense (*will* future), and write some of the completed sentences on the board.  
*If I learn English very well, I will be eligible to apply for a new job.*  
*If I learn English very well, I will attend university in the U.S.*  
*If I learn English very well, I will travel to Australia.*
- Because conditionals will be review for some students, write the basic headings of Chart 20-1 on the board, and ask students to give you examples of the conditionals they already know.
- After replicating as much of the chart as possible by eliciting information from students, review the chart in the book as a class.

### □ EXERCISE 2. Looking at grammar.

Page 416

Time: 5–10 minutes

- You and / or a volunteer can read the situation in each item aloud.
- Ask different students to complete the conditional sentences that follow each situation.
- Referring back to the chart, focus students' attention on the true / untrue distinction.
- Point out the verb tense in each type of clause and then, as you lead the exercise, relate these tenses to the time phrases in the exercise.

### □ EXERCISE 3. Warm-up. Page 417

Time: 3–5 minutes

- Ask students which tenses are referred to in the items and how the use of these tenses may change the meaning of the sentence.
- Discuss the difference between a general statement and one referring to a specific time.

### CHART 20-2. True in the Present or Future.

Page 417

Time: 15 minutes

Conditional sentences have a sort of “truth value” in the mind of the speaker. The *if*-clause contains a condition under which, in the speaker's opinion, an expected result might or might not occur. The result clause can state the speaker's prediction of an outcome.

Like adverb clauses of time, an *if*-clause usually does not contain a future tense verb, *will* or *be going to*. This is a fact about English usage that must be learned, even though it might seem illogical to some students. A language is not a logical set of scientific formulas or rules; it is a complex, flexible instrument of communication based on traditions and preferences. Students should understand this point by the time they complete this text.

In everyday conversation, the subjunctive use of *were* instead of *was* with singular subjects is more typical of American than British English. Favoring formal usage, the text encourages the use of *were*, but either is correct. (See examples (b) and (c) in Chart 20-3.)

You may want to incorporate the following sentence, which some learners find fun, into your lesson: *I would if I could, but I can't, so I won't*. It captures the distinction between the conditional and the factual.

- Write the chart title on the board.
- Start by reviewing time clauses using *when* and the fact that these clauses are followed by the simple present tense.
- With students' help, write a *when* time clause on the board.

*When Fabiana returns to Brazil, she will work in her mother's business.*

- Explain that *if*-clauses function in the same way. Elicit an *if*-clause from students and write it on the board.

*If Juana stays up too late, she \_\_\_\_ tired.*

- Point out to students that this is a general statement and it has no specific time frame.
- Tell students that the result clause has varied possible verb forms. With students' help, use an appropriate version of *become* in order to complete the sentence on the board.

*If Juana stays up too late, she becomes tired.*

- Change the sample sentence to show a specific time frame and write it on the board.

*If Juana stays up too late tonight, she \_\_\_\_ tired tomorrow.*

- Put the appropriate variations of the verb *become* on the board, and illustrate the possible result clause tenses when a specific time has been determined.

*If Juana stays up too late tonight, she will / could / may become tired tomorrow.*

- Go over the rest of the chart as a class.

### □ EXERCISE 4. Let's talk. Page 418

Time: 5–10 minutes

Students should be encouraged to look at the chart if necessary. There are a lot of rules for students to keep in mind and master. Remind them that the form of the answer is included and modeled in each question.

### □ EXERCISE 5. Looking at grammar.

Page 418

Time: 5–10 minutes

- Have students read the items aloud, choosing the correct form of the verb as they go.
- Either verb form works for items 3–5, so ask students to describe the subtle differences in meaning attached to the use of both possible verb forms.

### CHART 20-3. Untrue (Contrary to Fact) in the Present or Future. Page 419

Time: 10–15 minutes

*Untrue* does not mean that the speaker is lying, of course. It means that he or she is speaking of some situation that does not or cannot truly exist. The situation is hypothetical and not real. *Untrue* is defined as “contrary to fact” or “the opposite of what is true and real.”

- Write the chart title on the board.
- Start by making a statement about yourself that lends itself to this structure. Write on the board a statement describing an action you won't take or a plan you won't carry out, such as:

*I won't take a teaching job in Bangkok.*

- Elaborate on this by saying under what conditions you would complete this action even though you know this condition will not occur. Write this as an *if*-clause conditional.

*If I had a friend to accompany me, I would take a teaching job in Bangkok.*

- Explain to students that the *if*-clause in this case is in the past and the result clause is formed with **would** + base form of the verb.
- Highlight the verb forms in both the *if*-clause and the result clause.
- Write the true situation, in two sentences, beneath the conditional.

*If I had a friend to accompany me, I would take a teaching job in Bangkok.*

*I don't have a friend to accompany me.*

*Therefore, I won't take a teaching job in Bangkok.*

- Now ask students to think about dreams they would like to realize if the right conditions were present. Encourage them to be imaginative.
- Write an example on the board, using the same steps as above.
- Highlight the *if*-clause and result clause, and reiterate the true situation beneath the new conditional sentence. For example:

*If Consuela was the president of the United States, she would create a universal health care plan.*

*Consuela is not the president of the United States.*

*Therefore, she won't create a universal health care plan.*

- Give other students a chance to write about their wildest dreams in this way, and write them on the board.
- Review the rest of the chart as a class.

### □ EXERCISE 8. Looking at grammar.

Page 419

Time: 5–10 minutes

Because pairs of items in this exercise are related, showing true and untrue conditional statements, you may want to have students work on two items at a time.

- After giving students time to work on this exercise alone, lead them in a discussion of the correct forms and the differences in meaning.
- Explain that the speaker communicates an opinion about the truth value by his / her choice of verb forms. For example, if the *if*-clause is thought to be untrue or contrary to fact, the speaker will use the past tense.
- In order to help students understand the truth value, ask leading questions about this throughout the exercise, such as:

*Am I going to bake an apple pie?*

*Do I have enough apples to do this?*

*Do I know if I have enough apples?*

*Do I want to bake an apple pie?*

### □ EXERCISE 9. Let's talk. Page 419

Time: 10–15 minutes

- Write the terms *ethics* and *ethical dilemma* on the board. Ask students to explain both terms to you if they can.
- Explain that this exercise deals with ethical decisions, and discuss the fact that sometimes different circumstances influence whether a situation is 100 percent right or wrong.
- After you have discussed this point, divide the class into small groups for discussion, or review each item as a class.
- If working in small groups, give students sufficient time to work through the items.
- Then have different students write their conditional sentences on the board.
- As a class, first check the grammar in each sentence, and then vote on whether the conditions are “sufficient” to justify doing something normally considered wrong.

**Expansion:** You can expand on this activity further by offering students other ethical dilemmas and asking them to explain what they would do in various situations. Remind students to start each response with *if* by writing the following on the board:

*If \_\_\_\_\_, I would \_\_\_\_\_.*

For each situation below, students should use a conditional to explain under exactly what conditions they would take certain actions.

Possible situations:

A homeless person asks you for money on the street. You have extra money on you and you can afford to give it to this person.

A friend tells you he / she lost the expensive camera you just lent him / her.

At the movies, the people next to you talk loudly during the film, and you and your friends can't hear properly.

A guest in your house opens the refrigerator and helps himself / herself to food without asking you if it is okay to do so.

In a park, a babysitter slaps the child she is looking after.

You are at a party when the host says something very offensive or racist about a friend of yours.

You have been waiting in a line for ten minutes. Someone cuts in front of you.

You have seen your best friend's boyfriend or girlfriend on a date with someone else.

You are on a very crowded bus, and you are standing. An old person who can barely stand gets on the bus, but no one offers him / her a seat. You see a very young person continuing to sit comfortably while the elderly person is standing.

You are preparing for a math exam and accidentally come across the answers to it.

□ **EXERCISE 11.** Let's talk: interview.

Page 420

Time: 10–15 minutes

- Model the example with one student. You may want to add to the example in the text and write possible answers on the board.
- Students can begin with *But if . . .*. Demonstrate how to add appropriate emphasis to the first auxiliary.
- Anticipate that students may not agree that item 6 is a fact, and encourage them to refine the fact as they see fit.

**CHART 20-4.** Untrue (Contrary to Fact) in the Past. Page 421

Time: 10–15 minutes

Looking back at past times, we know whether events really occurred or not. Using conditional sentences, we can talk about hypothetical past events and results that would have or could have occurred had certain conditions been present.

It is possible to use *would* in *if*-clauses.

*If you'd try harder, you'd learn more.*

*If you would've told me about it, I could've helped you.*

The text does not teach this usage because it is not possible in all situations and is generally considered nonstandard, especially in formal written English.

- Write the chart title on the board.
- Write on the board the expression “Hindsight is 20/20.” Ask students to guess what this means. You may need to breakdown *hindsight* and discuss how vision is assessed.
- Ask students if they often think about how their life would be different now if they had had more information at the time of making a big decision. Specifically, ask what would have happened if the conditions had been different.
- Ask a few students to share an example from their own lives. If no one feels comfortable doing so, share one from your life or write one that is considered to be general knowledge. For example:

*If I had known there was going to be a test today, I would have studied more last night.*

- Write the verb tenses used under the *if*-clause and result clause of this conditional. Make sure students understand that both the first clause and the second are contrary to fact.

*If I had known there was going to be a test today,*  
(past perfect tense)

*I would have studied more last night.*  
(“would have” + past participle)

- Reiterate that both parts of this sentence are in the past. Write the true situation beneath each clause.

*If I had known there was going to be a test today,*  
(I didn't know.)

*I would have studied more last night.*  
(I didn't study very much last night.)

- Have students share some similar conditionals and write them on the board, following the steps taken above.
- Go over the chart as a class.

□ **EXERCISE 14.** Looking at grammar.

Page 421

Time: 5–10 minutes

- Remind students that another way of thinking about whether a condition is true is to consider whether it is still possible.
- In the example, item 1, *If the weather is warm* is still possible.
- In item 2, *If the weather were warm* is still not possible, and by using *were*, the speaker is telling us it isn't true.
- Give students a few minutes to work through the items on their own.
- Review the exercise as a class, taking time to make immediate corrections, and review any item students find particularly challenging by writing it on the board.

□ **EXERCISE 16.** Looking at grammar.

Page 422

Time: 10 minutes

In this exercise, three similar sentences are grouped together up to item 10. Lead students in a discussion of the differences in form and meaning among the grouped sentences.

□ **EXERCISE 18.** Let's talk. Page 423

Time: 10–15 minutes

This is a pattern practice, with controlled responses, so students can easily check on one another's verb form usage and work out the answers together if need be. You could, of course, choose to lead the exercise yourself if you think it is too difficult for students.

Often speakers add emphasis to the word *had* in the *if*-clause in responses that begin with *but if*.

**Expansion:** While students are in pairs, have them come up with their own versions of the items included in Exercise 18 and write complete conditionals from them, starting with *If I had* \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_. For example:

*If I had known how upset Nancy was, I wouldn't have made that joke about her cat.*



Hand out two index cards to each pair, and instruct each member of the pair to write either the *if*-clause or the main clause on his / her card. For example:

*If I had known how upset Nancy was,*

*I wouldn't have made that joke about her cat.*

Once these index cards have been completed, shuffle them and redistribute one card to each student. Instruct the students to read aloud what is on the index card they have just received. (It is important students read these aloud rather than simply show their card to other students in order to gain oral practice.) By reading what is on their card aloud and discussing the *if*- or main clause with other students, they should be able to find the original match. When everyone has found their match, have each new pair read the complete sentence to the class, and the "author pairs" can correct and approve the matches as appropriate.

### □ EXERCISE 21. Looking at grammar.

Page 425

Time: 10–15 minutes

These items are past, present, and future. Remind students that they must identify the time and also the truth value first, and then use appropriate verb forms.

### □ EXERCISE 23. Looking at grammar.

Page 426

Time: 10 minutes

Substituting an auxiliary for a verb phrase to avoid unnecessary repetition isn't explained in the text, as it is assumed students are familiar with these patterns. However, some students may have difficulty with this exercise. Its purpose is to prepare for the next oral exercise, so you should now take time for discussion of the patterns.

In speaking, the word in each blank should be given emphasis followed by a slight pause.

- Have a student read the first three completed example items aloud while you write each full sentence on the board.
- Underline the auxiliary in each one and ask students when, in their studies of English, they have used just the auxiliary (without the full verb) before.
- Many of them will recall using the auxiliary in simple short answers, but to remind them and reinforce the pattern, write a simple example of it on the board. For example:  
*Has Hiro ever visited Turkey? ⇒*  
*Short Answer: / Yes, he has.*
- Tell students they can use this same pattern with *but if . . .* and that they should complete the exercise using this verb form.

- Model and even exaggerate the spoken emphasis given to the auxiliary when it is used as a substitute for the complete verb form.
- Review as a class.

### CHART 20-5. Using Progressive Verb Forms in Conditional Sentences. Page 427

Time: 10 minutes

If students are unclear about the function and meaning of progressive verb forms, you might conduct a review of the relevant parts of Chapters 1 through 3. A "progressive situation" is one in which an activity is (was / will be / would be) in progress during or at a particular time.

- Write the chart title on the board.
- Elicit an example of the form to write on the board. A simple way to do this is to first ask students what they are doing right now (e.g., sitting in English class, learning about conditionals, etc.) and then ask them what they would be doing right now if they were not sitting in class.
- Write the starter sentence on the board and have various students complete it. For example:  
*If I were not sitting in English class right now, I \_\_\_\_.*
- Explain to students that they can complete this with a simple form of what they would do or a progressive form that describes what they would be doing.
- Write some examples on the board.  
*If I were not sitting in English class right now, I would go to the movies.*  
*If I were not sitting in English class right now, I would be sleeping at home.*
- As you write such sentences on the board, reiterate the "truth value" by asking students what they are actually doing right now.
- Explain that *were not + -ing* is used to make the present conditional untrue and that *had not been + -ing* is used to make the past conditional untrue.
- Review the rest of the chart and practice making sample sentence with the past conditional with students. Write their examples on the board. For example:  
*If Max had not been leaving town yesterday, I would have asked him to help us move.*  
*If Xiao Ping had not been studying for the TOEFL test last weekend, I would have asked her to join us for dinner.*

### □ EXERCISE 26. Looking at grammar.

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Time: 10 minutes

- Model the first item and place emphasis on the first auxiliary.
- Have students go around the room taking turns completing each item aloud.



- Make sure that students have inverted subject and verb appropriately as they omit the *if*. Make any corrections by writing the new pattern on the board as needed.

**CHART 20-8.** Implied Conditions. Page 430  
Time: 10 minutes

These examples show one of the most common uses of conditional verb forms. A result clause does not always come neatly attached to an *if*-clause. Many of the uses of *would* and *could* in daily conversation express results of implied conditions. In writing, one condition expressed near the beginning of a composition can affect word forms throughout.

- Write the chart title on the board.
- Underline the word *implied* and ask students to describe its meaning.
- Use this as an opportunity to explain that in many cases, the condition is present but isn't overtly tied to an actual *if*-clause that we can see.
- Have students read the examples (a), (b), and (c) aloud in turn, or you can make up three new examples using students' lives.
- For each example, ask students to restate the original as a typical conditional sentence, and write these on the board as students read them to you. For example:

(a) *Sylvie would have come to the party, but she had to meet her mother at the airport.*

*If Sylvie hadn't had to meet her mother at the airport, she would have come to the party.*

(b) *I couldn't have done it without you.*

*If I didn't have you, I couldn't have done it.*

(c) *Leo took a cab. Otherwise, he would have been late for work.*

*If Leo hadn't taken a cab, he would have been late for work.*

**EXERCISE 34.** Looking at grammar.  
Page 431  
Time: 5–10 minutes

An understanding of implied conditions expands students' communicative repertoire.

- Give students time to make the implied conditionals into actual *if*-clause conditionals and complete sentences.
- Review as a class, and write any particularly challenging items on the board to highlight the correct and required forms together.

**EXERCISE 36.** Looking at grammar.  
Page 431  
Time: 10 minutes

- Inform students that this exercise reviews all of the charts in this chapter, and invite them to look back at previous charts as needed.
- Encourage the use of contractions (for example, *wouldn't*, *hadn't*), especially in dialogues.
- Give students time to complete this individually before reviewing as a class.

**EXERCISE 38.** Let's talk. Page 433  
Time: 10–15 minutes

The purpose of this exercise is to prompt spontaneous, interactive use of conditional sentences. The exercise can be done in pairs and small groups, but it also works very well as a teacher-led activity, with you prompting a variety of responses.

You should set up situations that students will respond to. It isn't necessary to use the exact words that you find in this exercise. Feel free to alter each item or use alternative contexts that are more familiar to students.

**CHART 20-9.** Verb Forms Following *Wish*.  
Page 434  
Time: 10–15 minutes

Noun-clause verbs following *wish* are in a past form. The past form signifies "contrary to fact" — just as it does in conditional sentences in *if*-clauses. You may want to discuss verb relationships.

**"true" situation**

simple present  
present progressive  
simple past  
present perfect  
*will*  
*am / is / are going to*  
*can*  
*could + simple form*

**"wish" situation**

simple past  
past progressive  
past perfect  
past perfect  
*would*  
*was / were going to*  
*could*  
*could have + past participle*

*Wish* can also be followed by an infinitive, for example: *I wish to know the results of the test as soon as possible*. In this instance, *wish* is usually a more formal way of saying *want* or a more direct (possibly impolite or imperious) way of saying *would like*. This use is rare.

The subjunctive use of *were* instead of *was* with *I / he / she / it* is considered formal by some but standard by others. Students who will take the TOEFL exam need to recognize and be able to work with the subjunctive using *were*.

Some teachers like to compare *hope* and *wish*. See notes in this Teacher's Guide for Chart 20-10.

- Write the chart title on the board.
- Explain that the verb forms following *wish* are noun clauses and that the general pattern changes the tense in the clause to past time.
- You can point out that (or ask if) students have seen a similar pattern when learning reported speech, which is also formed from noun clauses.
- Write a simple sentence about a truth in the future on the board.

*Dana will return to India at the end of this month.*

- Underline the future *will* and write the word *future* beneath the sentence.

*future*

*Dana will return to India at the end of this month.*

- Now show the new pattern by writing a new *wish* sentence, using *would*.

*I wish (that) Dana would not return to India next month.*

- Continue with this step-by-step presentation for wishes about the present and wishes about the past, writing on the board to clearly show the changes made as you go.
- You may wish to remind students again of the similarities with reported speech tense changes, as they have mastered these already.
- Review the rest of the chart as a class.

#### □ EXERCISE 40. Looking at grammar.

Page 434

Time: 10 minutes

This exercise is a quick check of the students' understanding of Chart 20-9. If students seem to be having difficulty, make up additional items to illustrate verb-form usage in noun clauses following *wish*.

#### □ EXERCISE 41. Let's talk. Page 435

Time: 10–20 minutes

- Have half the class (Group A) close their books. Have the other half (Group B) keep their books open to bring with them as they interview the other students.
- Explain that Group B will be interviewing Group A. Encourage Group A students to give detailed answers and Group B students to ask follow-up questions.
- After ten minutes or so, switch roles. Tell Group B to close their books while Group A retrieves their books and begins interviewing.
- As a class, review the questions. Ask students to call out some of the answers they heard using complete sentences, such as:

*Maria wishes she could sing well.*

#### □ EXERCISE 42. Looking at grammar.

Page 435

Time: 10 minutes

Only an auxiliary (helping verb) verb is required in each item. Note that British and American English differ somewhat in usage. For example:

1. *I can't sing well, but I wish I could.* (AmE) vs. *I can't sing well, but I wish I could **do**.* (BrE)
2. *I didn't go but I wish I had.* (AmE) vs. *I didn't go but I wish I had **done**.* (BrE)
3. *He won't . . . , but I wish he would.* (AmE) vs. *He won't, but I wish he would **do**.* BrE

#### CHART 20-10. Using *Would* to Make Wishes about the Future. Page 436

Time: 10 minutes

When speakers want something to happen in the future and think it is possible, they usually use *hope* to introduce their idea: *I hope they (will) come*. When they want something to happen but think it is probably not possible, they'd probably use *wish*: *I wish they would come*.

A common mistake is the use of *will* in the noun clause following *wish*:

INCORRECT: *I wish they will come.*

- Write a situation on the board that the students, in general, wish to change, such as:  
*We are facing a problem with global warming right now.*
- Explain that when they want to make a wish about the future, which is not simply a restatement of the opposite of the current truth, they should use *would* to do so.
- Elicit a new wish about the future, based on the example on the board, and write the new wish on the board. Underline *would*.

*present*

*We have a problem with global warming right now.*

*I wish the global warming situation would improve.*

- Go over the chart as a class.

#### □ EXERCISE 46. Let's talk. Page 437

Time: 15–20 minutes

This exercise works best if you set up the questions so that students are eager to share their wishes and dreams. If you need to change any of the wording to make it more interesting or appropriate, do so.

Encourage students to elaborate on their answers, and help them to interact with one another as they offer responses.