English Conditionals Chart: Zero, First, Second, Third and Mixed

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Conditional	Form	Meaning	Example	Common mistake
Zero	if + present simple, present simple	always true: facts, rules, habits	If you heat ice, it melts.	If you will heat ice... (no will in the if-clause)
First	if + present simple, will + verb	a real possibility in the future	If it rains, we'll stay in.	If it will rain, we stay in.
Second	if + past simple, would + verb	imagined or unlikely, present or future	If I had more time, I'd learn Italian.	If I would have more time...
Third	if + past perfect, would have + past participle	imagined past: it did not happen	If I'd left earlier, I wouldn't have missed the train.	If I would have left earlier...
Mixed	if + past perfect, would + verb	imagined past with a present result	If I'd studied law, I'd be a lawyer now.	If I studied law, I would have been...

Useful alternatives to if

- unless = if... not: Unless you hurry, you'll be late.
- in case = because it might happen: Take an umbrella in case it rains.
- as long as / provided (that) = only if: You can borrow it as long as you bring it back.
- I wish / if only + past simple (present) or past perfect (past): I wish I spoke French. If only I hadn't said that.

> The if-clause can come first or second. Use a comma only when it comes first: We'll stay in if it rains.