

# First and second conditional

Lesson code: 4ARL-E7IF-964V

INTERMEDIATE +

## 1 Presentation

When we talk about possible or hypothetical situations with **If ...**, we can use a **first conditional** or **second conditional** structure. Study the table below.

Structure	Examples and use
<p><b>First conditional</b></p> <p><i>If I do ..., I'll (= I will) ...</i></p> <p>Instead of <b>will</b>, we can use other modal verbs, e.g. <b>can, might, may, must, should</b>.</p>	<p>According to the weather forecast, it might rain tonight. <b>If it rains, I'll stay</b> at home.</p> <p><i>We use the <b>first conditional</b> when there is a real possibility that something will happen in the future.</i></p> <p><b>If I don't</b> call you tonight, <b>you can call</b> me. <b>Will you wait</b> for me <b>if I am</b> late?</p>
<p><b>Second conditional</b></p> <p><i>If I did ..., I'd (= I would) ...</i></p> <p>Instead of <b>would</b>, we can use <b>could</b> or <b>might</b>.</p>	<p>At the moment, it's raining. <b>If it was</b> sunny, <b>I'd go</b> out.</p> <p><i>We use the <b>second conditional</b> when we imagine a situation or when there is very little or no possibility that something will happen.</i></p> <p>What <b>would you do if you found</b> a lot of money in the street? <b>If it wasn't</b> dark outside, <b>we could go</b> out.</p>

### Things to remember

- We do not use **will** or **would** in the **if**-part of a conditional sentence:  
If it ~~will rain~~ rains, I'll stay at home.
- The **if**-part of the sentence can go at the beginning or at the end:  
**If it rains**, I'll stay at home.                      I'll stay at home **if it rains**.
- In the **second conditional** we use **if + past** (if I did, if I didn't, etc.), but the meaning is *not* past. In this type of structure, the past tense refers to an imaginary or hypothetical situation, such as finding a lot of money in the street:  
What would you do if **you found** a lot of money in the street?
- In a **first conditional** sentence, we can use **when** instead of **if** for things that we are sure will happen:  
**When** she comes, I'll call you.

