

21st January
OET Writing – Conditionals

Starter

Look at these sentences:

1. If you eat a healthy diet, you **(will) boost/improve/strengthen** your immune system.
2. You will not lose weight if you **eat/consume/continue eating** foods high in saturated fat and refined sugar.
3. If you **were/became** compliant with your medication, you could manage your condition more effectively.
4. You wouldn't have needed surgery if you had **followed/taken/listened to** the physiotherapist's advice.

Which words could go in the spaces?

When we encounter or use conditional sentences, we should think about the following questions...

- When (is the action and result)?
- How real (is the action and result)?

Zero Conditional

If you go to the gym regularly, you get fit

He feels sick if he does too much exercise

Structure: If + present, present

We use it for... general facts, truths, things that always happen, scientific facts

First Conditional

If I study for the exam all day today, I will feel exhausted

She can visit her GP if she doesn't feel better after a week

If you notice any signs of infection, call the hospital immediately

Structure: If + present, future / can / imperative

We use it for... an action and result which the speaker or writer thinks is possible and often likely, often used to talk about a specific situation (not general)

Second Conditional

If he took his medication twice a day, he would feel better

You could recover more quickly if you rested in bed

If he were to take his medication twice a day, he would feel better

Structure: If + past (simple or continuous), would/could/might + bare infinitive

We use it for... unreal situations with an imaginary result, hypothetical situations

Third Conditional

If I had not gone to my doctor for a check-up, I would have missed the early signs of the condition

You could have damaged your knee more if you had continued running every day

Structure: If + past perfect (had + 3rd form), past modal (would/could/might + have + 3rd form)

We use it for... unreal past with an imaginary past result, opposite of reality, regret or appreciation of the past

Mixed Conditional

If I had not gone to the pharmacy for some painkillers, I would be in a lot of pain

You could have damaged your knee more if you did not use a support bandage

Structure: mixture of second and third conditionals: if + past perfect, would/could/might + bare infinitive (present modal) OR if + past simple or continuous, would/could/might + have + 3rd form (past modal)

We use it for... hypothetical or imaginary situations – could be a past action with a present result OR a habit in the present with a past result

What type of conditional are these sentences?

Should you need any further details, please do not hesitate to contact me

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Had I known you were coming, I would have prepared some food

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Practice:

Finish these conditional sentences with your own ideas and using correct grammar:

1. If a patient has diabetes...
2. Wash your hands if...
3. If he followed a healthier diet...
4. She will need surgery if...
5. If I were the patient...
6. The infection would not have spread if...
7. If the test results are positive...
8. If she had started physical therapy last year...