

23rd January

OET Language – Conditionals: Alternatives to ‘if’:

What is the difference between the meaning of these four sentences?

- **If** it rains, I'll play football – **when it rains, I will play football**
- **Unless** it rains, I'll play football – **unless = if not – I won't play football when it rains – “As long as it doesn't rain, I'll play football”**
- **Even if** it rains, I'll play football – **it doesn't matter if it rains, I'll still play football**
- **Only if** it rains, I'll play football – **only in this situation, I will play football**

What is the difference between these sentences?

- You can pay in cash **if** you have the exact change
- You can pay in cash **as long as** you have the exact change
- You can pay in cash **provided** you have the exact change
- You can pay in cash **providing** you have the exact change
- You can pay in cash **on condition that** you have the exact change

↓
more
formal

These sentences are all describing a ‘condition’ – something that we need to do or a rule we should follow

There is no difference in meaning between the sentences – the difference is in formality – they are increasing in formality

We can also use a structure similar to the first conditional in something called ‘future time clauses’:

- Please call me when you **get** home
- As soon as I **arrive**, I will go to bed
- I will be working until I **finish** the report
- After she **completes** the homework, she will go to the gym / After completing the homework, she will go to the gym.
- He can have some breakfast before he **leaves** the house / He can have some breakfast before leaving the house.

Practice:

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

1. If you experience severe side effects, **you should contact a doctor immediately.**
2. Patients should complete the entire course of antibiotics even if **they feel better.**
3. Provided you follow the prescribed physical therapy regimen, **you will achieve full mobility.**
4. You can resume your regular activities when **you finish/complete your antibiotics course.**
5. Unless the symptoms improve within 48 hours, **you should immediately go to the emergency department.**
6. Your cholesterol levels are likely to stabilise on condition that **you pay attention to your diet and take your medication regularly.**
7. As soon as the test results are available, **we will inform you.**
8. Ensure you have eaten a light meal before **starting the procedure. / ...you start the procedure.**
9. As long as the patient adheres to the treatment plan, **the rate of recovery will increase.**
10. It is advisable to stay hydrated and rest until **you recover.**