

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
- He can have some breakfast before he **leaves** the house

Practice:

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

1. If you experience severe side effects...
2. Patients should complete the entire course of antibiotics even if...
3. Provided you follow the prescribed physical therapy regimen...
4. You can resume your regular activities when...
5. Unless the symptoms improve within 48 hours...
6. Your cholesterol levels are likely to stabilise on condition that...
7. As soon as the test results are available...
8. Ensure you have eaten a light meal before...
9. As long as the patient adheres to the treatment plan...
10. It is advisable to stay hydrated and rest until...