

16 Zero, first and second conditionals

1 ZERO CONDITIONAL

If + PRESENT SIMPLE +	{ PRESENT SIMPLE
<i>If you eat too much,</i>	<i>you get fat.</i>

We use **if + Present Simple + Present Simple** to talk about something that is true at any time:

*If something **is** lighter than water, it **floats**.*

*I **don't** cycle to work if it's very cold.*

2 FIRST CONDITIONAL

If + PRESENT SIMPLE +	will (or 'll)
<i>If I see Ann, I'll invite her.</i>	

We use **if + Present Simple + will** to talk about things that are possible in the future:

*We **will go** to the beach this Saturday if the weather **is** hot enough.* (= It's possible it will be hot.)

Note that in this sentence there is a possibility and a result:

future possibility +	result
<i>If it's hot,</i>	<i>we will go to the beach.</i>

If the result is only possible, not certain, we use **might** (not **will**):

*If it's hot, we **might go** to the beach.*

(= It is possible that we will go to the beach if it's hot.)

We can use **unless** to mean 'if...not':

*We will go to the mountains on Saturday **unless** it rains.* (= ...if it doesn't rain.)

***Unless** you pay for the broken window, I'll phone the police.* (= If you don't pay, ...)

3 SECOND CONDITIONAL

If + PAST SIMPLE +	would (or 'd)
<i>If he worked less,</i>	<i>he'd enjoy life more.</i>

We use **if + Past Simple + would** to talk about the present, and to imagine something different from the real situation now:

*If Shakespeare **was** alive today, what **would** he **write** about?* (Shakespeare isn't alive today.)

*If animals **could** speak, we **would be** able to discover what they think.* (We aren't able to discover what animals think, because they can't speak.)

*If he **didn't live** so close to his office, he **wouldn't be** able to stay in bed so late in the morning.*

We can also use the second conditional to talk about an unlikely situation in the future:

*If all the ice in the world **melted**, many coastal towns **would disappear**.*

Practice

A Write what happens when you heat these things, as in the example.

- 0 The boiling point of water is 100 degrees centigrade.

So if you heat water to 100 degrees, it boils.

- 1 The melting point of gold is 1063 degrees centigrade.

So _____

- 2 The boiling point of alcohol is 78 degrees.

So _____

- 3 The melting point of silver is 960 degrees.

So _____

B Complete each sentence using the verb in brackets in the Present Simple or with **will**, as in the examples.

- 0 If she wins (win) a prize, Mary will be (be) very happy.

- 1 If John _____ (come) this weekend, we _____ (go) to the theatre.

- 2 If Ann _____ (write) to me, I _____ (tell) you what she says.