

# 3 Major Types of Conditional Sentences by Dharmendra Sheth MA, PhD (English)

**Type 1: Probable**

**Type 2: Improbable**

**Type 3: Impossible**



## Type 1: Open or probable type (Likely to happen, present or future meaning)

**If + Sub. + Verb/s/es +..., Sub. + will/can etc. + main verb**  
**Simple Present Tense**      **Sub. + Modal Aux. + verb**  
**(Conditional Clause)**                      **(Result Clause)**

**If he works hard, he will pass the test /succeed.**  
**If you run fast, you will win the race.**  
**If he doesn't work hard, he will fail.**



## Type 2: Improbable type

(Not likely to happen, imaginary, -ve or opposite message, present or future meaning)

**If + Sub. + V 2<sup>nd</sup> form+..., Sub. + would/could + main verb +...**  
**simple past Sub. + Modal Aux. + main verb**  
**(Conditional Clause) (Result Clause)**

**If he worked hard, he would / could + succeed / pass the test.**  
**(i.e., I know he is not going to work hard and therefore he is not going to pass the test.)**

**If I was/were a bird, I could/would fly.**  
**(i.e., I am not a bird and hence I will not fly.)**

**If I knew the answer, I would tell you.**  
**What would you do if you won the title?**

**If he was/were here = he is not here.**

**If I had... = I don't have...**

**If he knew... = he doesn't know...**



## Type 3: Impossible type

(used for the past time only, s.t. that happened in the past cannot be changed...)

**If + Sub. + had + V 3<sup>rd</sup> form + ... , Sub. + MA + have + V 3<sup>rd</sup> form + ... .**  
past perfect tense                      would/could/might + have + V 3<sup>rd</sup> form  
(Conditional Clause)                      (Result Clause)

### Alternative pattern:

**Had + Sub. + V 3<sup>rd</sup> + ... , Sub. + would /could /might + have + V 3<sup>rd</sup> + ... .**

**If he had worked hard, he would/could/might have passed the test.**  
**Had he worked hard, he would/could/might have passed the test.**

**If he had helped me = Had he helped me**



# 3 Major Types of Conditions

## Type 1: Probable

**If he works hard, he will succeed.**

## Type 2: Improbable

**If he worked hard, he would/could succeed.**

## Type 3: Impossible

**If he had worked hard, he would/could/might have succeeded.**



# Some more examples

Rewrite the following. Look at the example done for you.

Q: I'm really busy. Otherwise, I would help you.

A: If I weren't so busy, I would help you.

1. She is married. Otherwise, I would propose her.
2. Raju lives in a democracy. Under a repressive government, he couldn't speak as freely as he does.
3. It's raining hard today. In other circumstances, we would play outside on the ground.
4. In a perfect world, no one would be hungry.
5. Mira finished her report on time last week. Without that, I might have fired her.
6. Bharat was at a stadium. Under other circumstances, his shouting would not have been appropriate.



# Some uncommon examples

1. Should Sue call, please give her my message. = If Sue calls, please give her my message.
2. Had I enough money, I would buy a new car. = If I had enough money, I would buy a new car.
3. Had I had more time, I could have written a more complete report. = If I had had more time, I could have written a more complete report.
4. Were I rich, I would travel around the world. = If I were rich, I would travel around the world.
5. Were I to lose my job, I would be in big trouble. = If I lost my job, I'd be in big trouble.



# Some more examples

Sometimes, these conditional forms may continue for several sentences or a complete paragraph. Here's an example:

*I don't want to take a big vacation trip this year. I would have to take out a loan and I would have trouble repaying it. I wouldn't have any extra money to spend on little luxuries. I might hurt my credit rating, and I would worry so much that I couldn't have fun anyway.*

Here, the speaker never actually says, "If I took a big vacation trip this year" but the use of *would*, *could*, and *might* shows that the speaker is imagining the effects of taking a big trip.





# Complete the following sentences using your own ideas.

1. If you tease him, .....
2. I will do it if .....
3. What will you do if .....
4. If I was a dog, .....
5. If he won a lottery, .....
6. What would you do if .....
7. What would you have done if .....
8. If it had rained, .....
9. If he had applied, .....



# Some more examples

10. How will you react if .....
11. Who would have helped you if .....
12. If you bargain, .....
13. If you had bargained, .....
14. India might have won the match if .....
15. If you boil water, .....
16. If you sent it by post, .....
17. Someone would have done it if .....
18. If you do this exercise well, .....



## 3 Major Types of Conditions

1. **Probable:** If he works hard, he will succeed.
2. **Improbable:** If he worked hard, he would/could succeed.
3. **Impossible:** If he had worked hard, he would/could/might have succeeded.

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