

# CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

Conditional sentences have two parts : the *If-Clause* and the *Main Clause* :

In the sentence : ' *If you leave now, you will catch the train* ',

'**If you leave now**' is the *If- Clause*,  
and  
'**you will catch the train.**' is the *Main Clause*.

There are three kinds of conditional sentence: each kind contains a different pair of tenses.

## TYPE 1 - PROBABLE CONDITION

The verb in the *If-Clause* is in the present tense; the verb in the *Main Clause* is in the future tense :

*If we play well, we'll win.*

This type of sentence implies that it is quite probable that the action in the *If- Clause* will be performed.

## TYPE 2 - IMPROBABLE CONDITION

The verb in the *If-Clause* is in the simple past tense; the verb in the *Main Clause* is in the conditional tense :

*If she cycled to work, she would feel better.*

There is no difference in time between the first and the second type of conditional sentence. The second, like the first, refers to the present or future, and the past tense in its *If-Clause* is not a true past tense but a subjunctive, which indicates improbability or unreality.

**Type 2** is used :

**\* to talk about an unlikely event in the present or future**

*If I had more time, I would go to the club with you.*

**\* to talk about an imaginary event**

*If I were rich, I would live in Paris.*

**\* to give advice**

*If I were you , I'd call the doctor.*

## TYPE 3 - IMPOSSIBLE CONDITION

The verb in the *If-Clause* is in the past perfect tense; the verb in the *Main Clause* is in the perfect conditional :

*If he had seen you he would have helped you.*

Here we know that the condition cannot be fulfilled because the sentence refers only to past events.