

# Zero conditional

## Introduction



**If you heat water in a kettle, it boils.**

## Definition

**The zero conditional refers to real events. The result of the condition is always the same.**

## Construction

**'If' + present + present**

## Uses

**Zero conditional sentences are used to talk about general truths and facts, not about individual, specific situations.**

Use	Examples
Scientific facts	If you add salt to water, it boils more quickly.
Universal truths	People put on weight if they eat too much.
Things that happen regularly	If I leave home at 8 o' clock, I arrive at work at 9 o'clock.

**Note that** because the result is always the same, we can use 'when' as an alternative to 'if'. We also sometimes use 'whenever', especially for things that happen regularly:

**If/when people don't drink, they get thirsty.**

**If/when/whenever he's late for work, his boss gets angry.**

## Present continuous

**We can also use the present continuous:**

**If it's raining, people carry umbrellas.**

**If people are carrying umbrellas, it's probably raining.**

## Imperative

**Whenever you're tired, take a break.**

**When I'm working, don't disturb me.**

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## Modals

**Some modal verbs might be used in the main clause.**

**If you go to another country, you should try to speak the language.**

**You can get a refund if the plane is delayed.**

## Zero or first conditional?

**The first conditional is used for real, likely events. Compare these two sentences:**

**If I leave home at 8.00, I arrive at 9.00. [this refers to every time I leave at 8.00]**

**If I leave home at 8.00, I'll arrive at 9.00. [this refers to a specific occasion in the future]**

## Examples



**The alarm goes off if there's a fire.**



**Only children go in the garden if it's raining.**



**When you work with people from other countries, you might have to do things differently.**



**If she's eating then she's getting better.**



**If you visit London, don't miss the Beefeaters at the Tower of London.**

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