# Zero conditional

## 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.

.

## 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.**