

The Zero Conditional

A2 Grammar Lesson — Student Worksheet

Grammar Focus

We use the **zero conditional** for things that are always true — facts, rules and habits.

If + present simple , present simple

If you heat ice, it melts. If the fire alarm rings, everyone leaves the building.

Tip: we can often use **when** instead of **if**, with the same meaning.

Exercise 1 — True or False?

Read each sentence about the zero conditional. Write True or False.

1. We use the zero conditional to talk about general truths and facts. _____
2. In the zero conditional, we use 'will' in the main clause. _____
3. We can often use 'when' instead of 'if' in the zero conditional, with the same meaning.

4. The zero conditional describes something that always happens. _____
5. The zero conditional talks about imaginary situations that probably won't happen. _____
6. Both parts of a zero conditional sentence use the present simple tense. _____

Exercise 2 — Choose the Correct Verb

Choose the correct form to complete each sentence.

1. If you touch a hot pan, it ____ you.
2. Water ____ if it reaches 0°C.
3. If the shop ____ the same jacket cheaper, I buy it there.
4. If I ____ tired, I go to bed early.
5. The lights ____ off automatically if nobody is in the room.
6. If you don't water a plant, it ____.

Exercise 3 — Gap Fill

Put the verb in brackets into the correct form (present simple).

1. If you ____ (mix) blue and yellow, you get green.
2. Metal ____ (expand) when you heat it.
3. If the boss ____ (call) a meeting, everyone comes to the office.
4. Bread ____ (go) hard if you leave it out of the bag.
5. If it ____ (be) very cold, the roads get icy.
6. I ____ (check) my email if my phone buzzes.

7. If babies ____ (not / eat), they cry.
8. The alarm ____ (ring) if someone opens the door.

Exercise 4 — Match the Sentence Halves

Match each *if*-clause with the correct result. Write the letter.

1. If you don't wear a coat in winter, ____
2. If a customer complains, ____
3. If the sun goes down, ____
4. If you drop a glass, ____
5. If the meeting runs late, ____
6. If you eat too much sugar, ____

Endings: (a) it breaks. (b) you can get a headache. (c) we finish after 6pm. (d) you feel cold. (e) it gets dark. (f) we offer a refund.

Exercise 5 — Build the Sentence

Put the words below into the correct order to make a complete sentence.

1. , / the / door / button / the / If / opens. / you / press

2. you / in / leave / it / the / if / sun. / melts / Ice

3. a / we / welcome / If / reception. / , / them / customer / at / arrives

4. of / stops / The / out / runs / paper. / it / printer / if / working

5. gym. / finish / to / go / I / work / I / If / , / early / the

6. if / get / die / they / Plants / don't / water.

Exercise 6 — Rewrite with "When"

Rewrite each sentence using 'when' instead of 'if'.

1. If water reaches 100°C, it boils.

2. If the fire alarm rings, everyone leaves the building.

3. If I wake up early, I go for a run.

4. If it gets dark, the streetlights turn on.

5. If the shop closes, the staff lock the doors.

6. If she finishes her homework, she watches TV.

Exercise 7 — Your Own Sentences

Write your own zero conditional sentence for each topic.

1. Write a zero conditional sentence about what happens when it rains.

2. Write a zero conditional sentence about a rule at your workplace or school.

3. Write a zero conditional sentence about what happens when ice gets warm.

4. Write a zero conditional sentence about one of your daily habits.

5. Write a zero conditional sentence about a general fact about animals or nature.

6. Write a zero conditional sentence about what happens when the internet stops working at your office.

The Zero Conditional

A2 Grammar Lesson — Answer Key

Exercise 1 — True or False?

1. We use the zero conditional to talk about general truths and facts.

True

Correct — the zero conditional is for things that are always true.

2. In the zero conditional, we use 'will' in the main clause.

False

No 'will' — both clauses use the present simple: 'If you heat ice, it melts.'

3. We can often use 'when' instead of 'if' in the zero conditional, with the same meaning.

True

Correct — 'When you heat ice, it melts' means the same thing.

4. The zero conditional describes something that always happens.

True

Correct — the result is always true, not just possible.

5. The zero conditional talks about imaginary situations that probably won't happen.

False

That's the 2nd conditional. The zero conditional talks about real, general facts.

6. Both parts of a zero conditional sentence use the present simple tense.

True

Correct — If + present simple, present simple.

Exercise 2 — Choose the Correct Verb

1. If you touch a hot pan, it **burns** you.
2. Water **freezes** if it reaches 0°C.
3. If the shop **sells** the same jacket cheaper, I buy it there.
4. If I **feel** tired, I go to bed early.
5. The lights **turn** off automatically if nobody is in the room.
6. If you don't water a plant, it **dies**.

Exercise 3 — Gap Fill

1. If you **mix** (mix) blue and yellow, you get green.
2. Metal **expands** (expand) when you heat it.
3. If the boss **calls** (call) a meeting, everyone comes to the office.
4. Bread **goes** (go) hard if you leave it out of the bag.
5. If it **is** (be) very cold, the roads get icy.
6. I **check** (check) my email if my phone buzzes.
7. If babies **don't eat** (not / eat), they cry.
8. The alarm **rings** (ring) if someone opens the door.

Exercise 4 — Match the Sentence Halves

1. If you don't wear a coat in winter, you feel cold.
2. If a customer complains, we offer a refund.
3. If the sun goes down, it gets dark.
4. If you drop a glass, it breaks.
5. If the meeting runs late, we finish after 6pm.
6. If you eat too much sugar, you can get a headache.

Exercise 5 — Build the Sentence

1. If you press the button, the door opens.
2. Ice melts if you leave it in the sun.
3. If a customer arrives, we welcome them at reception.
4. The printer stops working if it runs out of paper.
5. If I finish work early, I go to the gym.
6. Plants die if they don't get water.

Exercise 6 — Rewrite with "When"

1. If water reaches 100°C, it boils.
When water reaches 100°C, it boils.
2. If the fire alarm rings, everyone leaves the building.
When the fire alarm rings, everyone leaves the building.
3. If I wake up early, I go for a run.
When I wake up early, I go for a run.
4. If it gets dark, the streetlights turn on.
When it gets dark, the streetlights turn on.
5. If the shop closes, the staff lock the doors.

When the shop closes, the staff lock the doors.

6. If she finishes her homework, she watches TV.

When she finishes her homework, she watches TV.

Exercise 7 — Model Answers

Accept any grammatically correct zero conditional sentence that fits the prompt. Models below.

1. Write a zero conditional sentence about what happens when it rains.

If it rains, the streets get wet.

2. Write a zero conditional sentence about a rule at your workplace or school.

If you arrive late, you sign the visitor book.

3. Write a zero conditional sentence about what happens when ice gets warm.

If ice gets warm, it melts.

4. Write a zero conditional sentence about one of your daily habits.

If I get home late, I make a quick dinner.

5. Write a zero conditional sentence about a general fact about animals or nature.

If a bear is hungry, it looks for food.

6. Write a zero conditional sentence about what happens when the internet stops working at your office.

If the internet stops working, we call IT support.