

Advanced Morphology and Syntax in EPS

** If-Clauses **

Sentences with *if* are used to express possibilities.

- **ZERO CONDITIONAL**: sometimes sentences with *if* express certainty rather than possibility. The **ZERO CONDITIONAL** is used to talk about something that is **ALWAYS TRUE**, or that was always true in the past:

If Clause	Main Clause
If + present simple / past simple	present simple / past simple
e.g. If you <i>mix</i> blue and red, you <i>get</i> purple. If I <i>asked</i> her to come with us, she always <i>said</i> no. "If Russia <i>doesn't invade</i> , the gas <i>keeps</i> flowing because Ukraine, like Russia, needs the money; Ukraine also needs the gas for its own heating as well" ¹ .	

- **FIRST CONDITIONAL**: the **FIRST CONDITIONAL** is used to talk about the consequences of a **POSSIBLE** action:

If Clause	Main Clause
If + present simple	future tense (= will /can /may + base verb form)
e.g. If I <i>write</i> my essay this afternoon, I <i>will have</i> time to go out tonight. "What's missing, however, is a bolder plan for what <i>will happen</i> to Russia if Putin <i>tries</i> to gobble up significant parts of Ukraine" ² . "If Russia <i>attacks</i> a sovereign country in Europe again, and especially if it <i>is</i> even more aggressive than in the past, there <i>can be</i> no business as usual in energy economics" ³ .	

¹ Michael E. O'Hanlon and David G. Victor, "If Russia invades, sanction its oil and gas", <https://www.brookings.edu/>, January 26, 2022.

² Ibidem.

³ Ibidem.

- **SECOND CONDITIONAL:** the **SECOND CONDITIONAL** is used to talk about the consequences of a **HYPOTHETICAL** action:

If Clause	Main Clause
If + past simple	conditional tense (= would/could/should/might + base verb form)
e.g. "Would Russia use nuclear weapons if its nuclear forces came under concerted Western attack?" ⁴	

- **Third Conditional:** the **THIRD CONDITIONAL** is used to talk about the possible consequences of an **IMPOSSIBLE** action, i.e. **THAT DID NOT HAPPEN:**

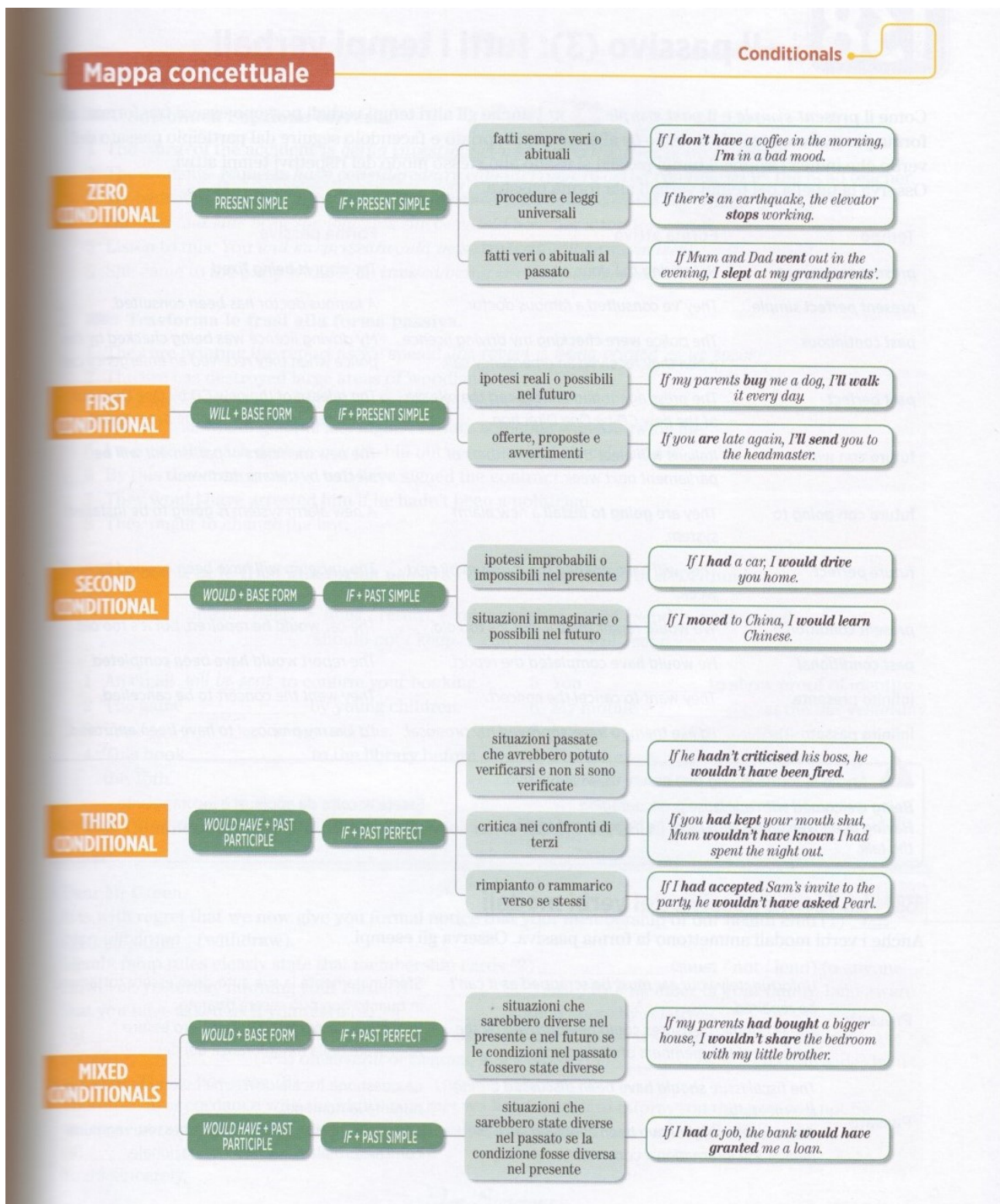
If Clause	Main Clause
If + past perfect	conditional perfect tense (= would/could/should/might + have + past participle)
e.g. If I <i>had written</i> my essay this afternoon, I <i>would have had</i> time to go out tonight.	

MIXED CONDITIONALS

Not all sentences containing *if* follow the same patterns as those presented on the pages above. The sequence of tenses depends on the meaning that has to be conveyed:

- If Robert **wasn't** so lazy, he **could have been** promoted. → He is permanently lazy which explains why he failed to get promotion.
- I'll **lend** you \$1,000 if it'll **help** you to set up your business. → There is nothing conditional about this sentence; the advantage is the result of the gift of money. Here *if* means *if it is true that*.
- We **would be** grateful if you **would send** us your payment made out to the order of 'InfoMart'. → This is a polite request).

⁴ See Reading Text no. 6, p. 5, a.y. 2024/2025.



if and unless

Unless often replaces *if* when a negative expression follows. Look at the following pairs:

* We will stop the meeting now *if* there is nothing else to discuss.

vs

* We will stop the meeting *unless* there is something else to discuss.

* *If* you do not wear a suit and tie you will not be allowed into the club.

vs

* You will not be allowed into the club *unless* you wear a suit and tie.

provided (that) / so long as / on condition (that)

When stating a condition it is also possible to use the following grammatical collocation: *provided (that) / so long as / on condition (that)*. It is not necessary to say or write *that*:

- *Provided (that)* they do not go back on their offer, we will sign the agreement next week.
- We will be happy to work with you *so long as* you pay half of the advertising costs.
- We might be able to reduce the number of hours worked *on condition (that)* there is an increase in productivity.