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Grammar Reference

1. Grammar Reference (Please remember that this grammar reference section is not a lesson plan for teachers. In fact, it is and should be designed in such a way that students can comprehend the grammar points on their own.)

Present unreal conditional with **unless**, **only if**, and **even if**

We use “**unless**” to talk about the exceptions that would change the speaker’s decision.

Example: His sister **would** go for a walk **unless** he **were** too tired
He **wouldn’t** be late for the train **unless** he **forgot** his luggage

Note: 1. We don’t use **will** or **would** in the clause after **unless**:

Example: **Unless** we leave now, we can be late. Not: ~~Unless we will leave now, can be late.~~

2. We cannot use **unless** in questions

Example: What will you do if you do not pass this final exam?
Not: ~~What will you do unless you pass this final exam?~~

We use “**only if**” to stress the condition for the result.

Example: He **would** welcome to come along **only if** he **behaved** himself.
We **would** buy you a bicycle **only if** you **did** well on your exams.

We use “**even if**” to talk about the unexpected results.

Example: **Even if** we **had** the money, we **wouldn’t** live in a big house.
I **would** still go out **even if** it **rained** heavily.

To ask a follow-up question after a yes / no question, we use a **shortened conditional**, especially in spoken or informal English. The positive shortened conditional is **if so**, and the negative shortened conditional is **if not**.

Example: I might have a good phone signal at the cabin.
If so, I'll give you a call when I get there.

Do you think you'll need the washing machine?
If not, then the detergent isn't in that cupboard.

Wishes and regrets

We use **wish + simple past, past continuous, or could / would + verb** to talk about *wishes about the present and future*.

Example: I **wish** I **had** a big house.
We **wish** we **didn't need** to work today.
I **wish** that I **could speak** Spanish

We use **wish + past perfect** to talk about *regrets about the past*.

Example: I **wish** I **had studied** harder at school.
They **wish** the train **had been** on time.

We use **if + past perfect** and **could / would have + past participle** to talk about *regrets about the past*.

Example: **If he had known** that you needed help, **he would have helped** you.
If I hadn't been so busy, I **could have gone** to the party.

We use **if only** to talk about *strong wishes about the present or future, or strong regrets about the past*.

Example: **If only** he would save money!
If only I hadn't eaten the prawns.

Note: **If only** clauses are often used without a main clause.

We use *wishes* and *regrets* with *comparative words*, such as *(not) enough, more, less, and better*, and intensifiers, such as *really and very*.

Example: He *didn't* save *enough* money last summer.
He wishes he had saved *more* money last summer.
She bought *too many* science books today.
She wishes she had bought *fewer* science books today.
Jack *doesn't* understand the grammar lesson well.
Jack wish he understood the grammar lesson *better*.