ENGLISH TENSES
CONDITIONAL CLAUSES

CONDITIONAL CLAUSES THEORY

- ### INTRODUCTION

RULE 1

> **If-sentences** are also called **conditional clauses** (*Bedingungssätze*). They consist of **two parts**: a **condition** (*Bedingung*) and a **consequence** (*Folge*). With regard to **word order** there are two possibilities:

1. start with *if* and use a comma		2. put *if* in between and use no comma	
CONDITION	CONSEQUENCE	CONSEQUENCE	CONDITION
If you ask me,	*I will help you.*	*I will help you*	*if you ask me.*

> We can use *unless or except if* to mean *if … not*.

*You can't come in **unless** you have a ticket. (= You can't come in **if** you do**n't** have a ticket.)*
*Except if I'm very tired, I go to bed about midnight. (= **If** I'**m not** very tired, I go to bed about midnight.)*

> A person who says *when* is **sure** that something will happen (case of reality). A person who says *if* is **unsure** whether it will happen or not.

If it snows tomorrow, we'll go skiing.	*When it snows, I go skiing.*
I will have some Coke if there's any left.	*I'll have a glass of Coke when I come home.*

- ### CASE OF REALITY (*FALL DER WIRKLICHKEIT*)

RULE 2

> With **facts**, **natural laws** (*Naturgesetz*), **repetitions** and **requests** (*Bitte, Aufforderung*) we use for the **condition *if* + present** and for the **consequence** the **present**. In this case *if* and *when* can be used.

CONDITION *if* + present	CONSEQUENCE present	CONSEQUENCE present	CONDITION *if* + present
*If you **heat** snow,*	*it **melts**.*	*Snow **melts***	*if you **heat** it.*
*When Tom **is** sad,*	*he always **listens** to music.*	*Tom always **listens** to music*	*when he **is** sad.*
*If you **leave**,*	*please **shut** the windows!*	*Please **shut** the windows*	*if you **leave**!*

- ### CASE OF POSSIBILITY (*FALL DER MÖGLICHKEIT*)

RULE 3

> If the **condition can be possibly met** (*möglicherweise erfüllbar*), we use for the **condition *if* + present** and for the **consequence *will / can* etc + base form**.

CONDITION *if* + present	CONSEQUENCE *will* etc + base form	CONSEQUENCE *will* etc + base form	CONDITION *if* + present
*If you **ask** me,*	*I **will help** you.*	*I **will help** you*	*if you **ask** me.*
*If I **find** my glasses,*	*I **can read** the paper.*	*I **can read** the paper*	*if I **find** my glasses.*

- ### CASE OF IMPROBABILITY (*FALL DER UNWAHRSCHEINLICHKEIT*)

RULE 4

> If the **condition can be improbably met** (*unwahrscheinlich erfüllbar*), we use for the **condition *if* + past tense** and for the **consequence *would / could* etc + base form** (= **conditional I**). Use *were* for all persons (also with *I, he, she* and *it*) instead of *was*.

CONDITION *if* + past	CONSEQUENCE *would* etc + base form	CONSEQUENCE *would* etc + base form	CONDITION *if* + past
*If Roger **went** away,*	*she **would cry**.*	*She **would cry***	*if Roger **went** away.*
*If I **were** you,*	*I **would stop** smoking.*	*I **would stop** smoking*	*if I **were** you.*

- ### CASE OF IMPOSSIBILITY (*FALL DER UNMÖGLICHKEIT*)

RULE 5

> If the **condition can be impossibly met** (*unerfüllbar*) as it was in the past, we use for the **condition *if* + past perfect** and for the **consequence *would / could have* etc + past participle** (= **conditional II**).

CONDITION *if* + past perfect	CONSEQUENCE *would have* etc + past participle	CONSEQUENCE *would* have etc + past participle	CONDITION *if* + past perfect
*If I **had seen** her,*	*I **would have** asked her.*	*I **would have** asked her*	*if I **had seen** her.*
*If we **had saved**,*	*we **could have bought** it.*	*We **could have bought** it*	*if we **had saved**.*

> **Two consequences** are sometimes possible, either a **case of improbability (now)** or a **case of impossibility (past)** consequence.

*If I **had won** in the lottery, I **would be** rich now.*	*…, I **would have been given** lots of money.*
*If it **hadn't been invented**, it **couldn't be** used now.*	*…, it **couldn't have been used** by the inventor.*