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CONDITIONAL CONUNDRUMS

Aim

To raise student awareness of variations on standard conditional forms and their meaning, style, and attitude

Language

Zero, first, second, and third conditionals

Variations on standard conditional patterns, including use of *were to*, modal use of *will*, omission of and alternatives to *if*, use of *in case*

Skills

Speaking

Lesson link

Use after Classbook Lesson 24, *Language work*

Materials

One copy of the *Spot the difference* worksheet per student

Pre-activity (10 minutes)

- Ask students to suggest sentences for each of the main types of conditional (types zero, first, second, and third) and write them on the board.
- As an awareness-raising stage, write the following sentences on the board, none of which fit the standard zero, first, second, or third conditional patterns.
I'd be grateful if you'd give me a lift.
If it'll make you happier, I'll give up smoking.
I wouldn't be here now if I had had time to finish yesterday.
- Ask the students to identify the types and when they find that they can't, explain that a lot of so-called conditionals don't actually conform to standard patterns. The following activity exposes them to further examples.

Procedure (30 minutes)

- Divide the class into pairs and give out one worksheet per student. Explain that all the sentences on the worksheet are grammatically correct, even though many do not fit the standard patterns, but that there are differences of meaning, style, and attitude. Go through the first one as a class.
- Ask the students to discuss the differences between the conditionals. Monitor and help as they work.
- Lead whole-class feedback on the answers.

Extension activity

- Ask the students to find examples of conditional sentences in authentic texts (newspaper and magazine articles, books they are reading, signs and notices) to see whether they fit the standard zero, first, second, and third conditional patterns.

Suggested answers

- In **b**, *were to* and *wouldn't be* are used to make the suggestion very tentative and therefore more polite than **a**.
- The inversion in **b** makes it sound more formal than **a**.
- The use of *will* in **a** is modal and refers to the person's repeated habit.
b is a standard first conditional.
- The parent speaking in **b** is more annoyed and expects that she will have to punish Martin.
- a** is a standard third conditional. The person was hungry at some time in the past.
b is a mixed conditional. The person is hungry now.
- a** is more emphatic and formal.
- a** and **b** both mean that mean that Susan's presence is desirable, but **b** sounds more informal.
c means that Susan's presence is not desirable.
- a** the speaker will take an umbrella as a precaution.
b they will only take it if it is raining when they leave.
- a** is a first conditional. It is possible / likely that the person will see Harry.
b *should* indicates that the person is less likely to see Harry.
c means the same as **b**, but the inversion instead of *if* makes it more formal.
- The inversion in **b** makes the speaker sound more distant and accusatory.
- In **a**, the bank is still lending money. In **b**, the bank is possibly still lending money. We are not sure because the reference is to the past. The use of *were* in **a** is more formal than *was* in **b**. In **c** and **d**, it is all in the past. The use of inversion in **d** is more formal than *if* in **c**.
- any* is usually used with conditional offers. In **b** *some* is used to make the offer more positive.
- b** is more polite. The use of *will* refers to the listener's willingness to follow.
- a** is the conversational and colloquial version of **b**. **a** sounds more threatening.

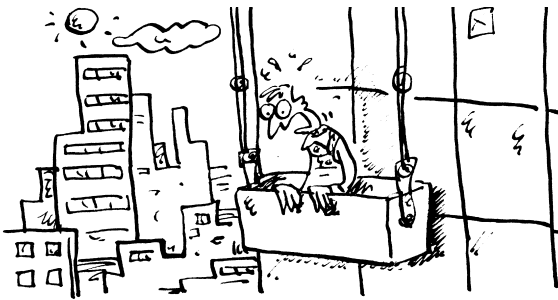
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CONDITIONAL CONUNDRUMS

Spot the difference

- 1 a** If you park your car over there, you won't be blocking the traffic.
b If you were to park your car over there, you wouldn't be blocking the traffic.

- 2 a** If we had known he was afraid of heights, we wouldn't have given him the job.
b Had we known he was afraid of heights, we would not have given him the job.



- 3 a** If you will go out late every night, it's not surprising you feel tired.
b If you go out late every night, you will feel tired.

- 4 a** Martin, if you upset your sister again, I'll stop your pocket money.
b Martin, if you upset your sister again, I'm going to stop your pocket money.



- 5 a** If you'd had a big breakfast, you wouldn't have been so hungry.
b If you'd had a big breakfast, you wouldn't be so hungry.

- 6 a** I'll come with you provided Daniel isn't going.
b I'll come with you if Daniel isn't going.

- 7 a** David won't go unless Susan is going.
b If Susan goes, David will too.
c Pete won't go if Susan is going.

- 8 a** I'll take my umbrella in case it rains.
b I'll take my umbrella if it rains.

- 9 a** If you see Harry, please don't tell him I'm getting married.
b If you should see Harry, please don't tell him I'm getting married
c Should you see Harry, please do not tell him that I am getting married.

- 10 a** If I'd known you were going into town, I'd have asked you to get something for dinner.
b Had I known you were going into town, I'd have asked you to get something for dinner.

- 11 a** If it weren't for the bank's generosity, we would probably be bankrupt.
b If it wasn't for the bank's generosity, we would probably have gone bankrupt.
c If it hadn't been for the bank's generosity, we would probably have gone bankrupt.
d Had it not been for the bank's generosity, we would probably have gone bankrupt.

- 12 a** Let me know if you want anything to drink.
b Let me know if you want something to drink.

- 13 a** If you follow me, I'll show you where the crocodiles are kept.
b If you'll follow me, I'll show you where the crocodiles are kept.



- 14 a** You want to get in, you pay like everyone else.
b If you want to get in, you will have to pay like everyone else.

