**IF X UNLESS IF X WHEN**

**Use of *if* and *unless***

Some students are not sure whether to use if or unless. The difference is, however, straightforward. This page will try to provide an explanation of these two words and show how they are used in [conditional sentences](https://www.myenglishpages.com/english/grammar-lesson-conditionals.php).

**Meaning of *if* and *unless***

**IF** means on (the) condition that, provided (that), providing (that), presuming (that), supposing (that), assuming (that), as long as... JESTLIŽE, -LI, KDYŽ, POKUD, apod. v reálných podmínk. větách KDYBY, POKUD BY, apod. v nereálných podmínk. větách

**Example:** ***If*** I am free this evening, I will watch the match.

**UNLESS** means except if. POKUD NE (reálné) KDYBY NE (nereálné)

**Example:** You will feel cold ***unless*** you wear a warm jacket.

Both ***if*** and ***unless*** are used to introduce [conditional sentences](https://www.myenglishpages.com/english/grammar-lesson-conditionals.php):

**Conditional Sentence Type 1:**

* ***If*** we don't hurry, we will be late for the show.
* ***Unless*** we hurry, we will be late for the show.

**Conditional Sentence Type 2**

* ***If*** he had permission from his parents, he would travel alone.
* ***Unless*** he had permission from his parents, he wouldn't travel alone.

**Conditional Sentence Type 3**

* ***If*** you hadn't suggested it, I wouldn't have phoned him.
* ***Unless*** you had suggested it, I wouldn't have phoned him.

# *If* or *when*? from [English Grammar Today](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/grammar/british-grammar/)

We use ***if*** to introduce a possible or unreal situation or condition. We use ***when*** to refer to the time of a future situation or condition that we are certain of:

*You can only go in* ***if*** *you’ve got your ticket.* ***When*** *I’m older, I’d love to be a dancer.*

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| --- | --- |
| ***If*** *Giles comes back to the office, can you tell him I’ve gone home.* | The speaker does not know whether Giles is coming back to the office. It is possible, but not definite. |
| ***When*** *Giles comes back to the office, can you tell him I’ve gone home.* | The speaker is certain that Giles is coming back to the office. |

To talk about situations and conditions that are repeated or predictable, we can use either *if* or *when* + present verb form:

*You can drive if you’re 17.*

*If you don’t add enough wood, the fire goes out.*

*When we go camping, we usually take two tents.*

*She gets out of breath easily when she’s jogging.*

### Typical error

* We don’t use *when* to introduce possible or unreal situations:

*Unfortunately, if you arrive too late, you are not allowed to take the exam because they don’t accept late enrolment.*

Not: … when you arrive too late …

[**https://www.helpforenglish.cz/article/2008120401-when-vs-if**](https://www.helpforenglish.cz/article/2008120401-when-vs-if) **výklad česky**

2 EXERCISES with KEY[**https://www.grammarbank.com/if-unless-exercise.html**](https://www.grammarbank.com/if-unless-exercise.html)