English grammar

Zero conditionals

There are four basic types of conditional sentences in the English language. Each type has two parts - the main clause and the if clause.

Zero conditional: *I take my umbrella if it rains.*
First conditional: *I'll call you if I work late.*
Second conditional: *If the bus didn't arrive on time, I would drive you to the airport.*
Third conditional: *She wouldn't have come if I hadn't invited her.*

Zero conditional

The zero conditional describes situations that are always true. *If* has the same meaning as *when* or *whenever*.

If I go to school, I get up at seven. (Whenever I go to school I get up at the same time.)
If you park your car on double yellow lines, you pay a fine. (Whenever you park illegally, you pay a fine.)
Bill always helps me if I ask him. (Bill helps me whenever I ask him.)

We use the present simple tense in both the main clause and the if clause.

Other forms

Apart from the basic forms (the present simple in the main clause and the if clause), we can use other verb forms in the zero conditional sentences.

If you want to be healthy, you must exercise. (a modal verb in the main clause)
If you are tired all day long, sleep more. (an imperative in the main clause)

Note

If is the most frequent expression in the if clauses, but other expressions are also possible.
even if, provided (that), unless, on condition (that)

John always shouts even if there's no need.
Meet goes off provided that you don't keep it in a fridge.
Iron melts on condition that it is heated.
Jane never says hello unless you say hello to her first.

Zero conditional exercises:

www.e-grammar.org/conditional-0-exercises-pdf/

Our tip: www.e-grammar.org/pdf-books/ All PDF exercises + grammar rules in one place.