

# Conditionals

## Translate the following sentences into Czech:

- 1) Jestli jsem tak chytrý, jak si myslíš, měl jsem být už dávno bohatý.  
If I am as clever as you think, I should have been rich a long time ago.
- 2) Kdybych byl měl tvé výhody, byl bych teď bohatý.  
If I had had your advantages, I'd be rich now.
- 3) Kdyby zmeškal autobus, nebude tu včas.  
If he missed the bus, he won't be here on time.  
→ Sense and context permitting, any tense sequence is possible. (Alexander 14.3)

## Are the following sentences correct?

- If he has been travelling all night, he will need a rest.  
If he is standing in the rain, he will catch cold.  
If she has arrived at the station, she will be here soon.  
→ Yes, they are.  
In Type 1 conditionals, all present tenses can be used after *if*, not just the simple present. (14.4)

Fixed phrases like *if necessary* and *if so* are in fact abbreviated *if*-clauses. Take a brief look at the two sentences below and provide their full forms (the ones one would normally use in formal English).

Inflation may be rising. If so, prices will go up.

Inflation may be rising. If this be so, prices will go up.

Inflation may be rising. If this should be so, prices will go up. (We often use *should* before *be* in such cases, especially when we wish to suggest that the situation referred to is improbable.)

Please submit our samples to them and, if necessary, provide more detailed information.

Please submit our samples to them and, if it be necessary, provide more detailed information.

Please submit our samples to them and, if it should be necessary, provide more detailed information. (We often use *should* before *be* in such cases, especially when we wish to suggest that the situation referred to is improbable.)

Prosíme, abyste jim předložili naše vzorky a podle potřeby jim podali podrobnější informace.

## Type 1 conditionals

### Can *should* be used after *if* in Type 1 conditionals? When?

- 1) *If + should* (+ bare infinitive), instead of *if + present*, makes the condition more doubtful.(14.8)
- 2) *If + should* + imperative in the main clause is used especially when we want to make polite requests or suggestions, or to tell people (tactfully) what to do.

What is the difference between the following two sentences?

If he calls, tell him I'll ring back.

If he should call, tell him I'll ring back. → the condition is made more doubtful  
→ *If + should* (+ bare infinitive), instead of *if + present*, makes the condition more doubtful. (14.8)

What is the difference between the following two sentences?

If you write to her, send her my love.

If you should write to her, send her my love. → more polite  
→ *If + should + imperative* in the main clause is used especially when we want to make polite requests or suggestions, or to tell people (tactfully) what to do.

Reformulate the following sentence, starting as indicated.

If you are interested in our offer, please contact us.

Should.....

→ Should you be interested in our offer, please contact us.

→ A condition can be expressed without *if* by beginning a sentence with *should*. This is rather formal and is often found, for example, in business letters.

Reformulate the following sentence, starting as indicated.

If you fail to pay, they'll cut off the electricity.

Fail.....

→ Fail to pay and they'll cut off the electricity.

→ Imperatives can be used in place of *if*-clauses to comment, make requests, make a bargain, offer advice, threaten and so on. The use of the imperative conveys more urgency than the *if*-clause. (14.9)

## Type 2 conditionals

Reformulate the following sentence, using the words *could* and *should*.

If I met you now, I would show you something.

If.....

If I could meet you now, I should show you something.

→ In Type 2, *if* is followed by a past tense or *could* (= was/were able to). The main clause is normally formed with *would*, though *should* can be used instead of *would* after *I* and *we*.

Have a look at the following pairs of sentences and comment on them.

If I was better qualified, I'd apply for the job.

If I were better qualified, I'd apply for the job.

→ Both sentences are correct because:

*Were* can be used in place of *was* after *if I/he/she/it*. There is no difference in meaning, but *were* is more doubtful.

If I were you, I'd accept their offer.  
~~If I was you, I'd accept their offer.~~

If I were in Jane's position, I'd walk out on him.  
~~If I was in Jane's position, I'd walk out on him.~~

→ We use *were*, i.e. not *was* in these expressions (If I were you/If I were in your position).

If it weren't for your help, I would still be homeless.  
~~If it wasn't for your help, I would still be homeless.~~

→ We use *were*, i.e. not *was* in these expressions (If it were not for/Were it not for).

### Compare the following two sentences.

*If I were to (or was to) ask you, would you help me?*

*If I asked you, would you help me?*

→ Instead of an ordinary verb in the simple past, we can use *were* or *was* + *to*-infinitive in Type 2 conditional clauses. *Were to* makes a suggestion sound more tentative and polite. The same kind of conditional can be expressed without *if*, if we begin a sentence with *were* (not *was*). This kind of inversion is common only in very formal contexts:

*Were the government to cut Value Added Tax, prices would fall.*

## Type 3 conditionals

### Take a brief look at the following sentence and compare the two contracted forms used in it. Do they differ from each other?

If I'd (= I had) left sooner, I'd (= I would) have been on time.

### Reformulate the following sentences, starting as indicated.

If the management had acted sooner, the strike wouldn't have happened.  
Had.....

→ Had the management acted sooner, the strike wouldn't have happened.

If it hadn't been for the unusually bad weather, the rescue party would have been able to save the climber.

H.....  
.....

Had it not been for the unusually bad weather, the rescue party would have been able to save the climber.

→ The form *Had (he)* is a formal variation of *If (he) had*.

## Other uses of 'if' and similar conjunctions

### Reformulate the following sentence, starting as indicated.

If you don't change your mind, I won't be able to help you.

Unless.....

→ Unless you change your mind, I won't be able to help you.

→ 'If...not' and 'unless' are sometimes interchangeable.

Are 'if...not' and 'unless' interchangeable in the following sentences.

I couldn't have got to the meeting on time – unless of course I had caught an earlier train. = The speaker didn't get to the meeting.

I couldn't have got there if I hadn't caught an earlier train. = The speaker *did* get to the meeting.

→ No, they are not (see p. 281).

Reformulate the following sentences, using implied conditionals.

If we're lucky, we'll be there by tomorrow.

With.....

→ With luck, we'll be there by tomorrow.

If we give them time, they'll probably agree.

Given.....

→ Given time, they'll probably agree.

If you could hear him talk, you'd think he was Prime Minister.

To.....

→ To hear him talk, you'd think he was Prime Minister.

If he didn't have his pension, he would starve.

But.....

→ But for his pension, he would starve.

If you hadn't helped, I couldn't have done it.

Without.....

→ Without your help, I couldn't have done it.

If circumstances had been different, I would have said yes.

In.....

→ In different circumstances, I would have said yes.

## Indirect speech (reported speech)

Turn the direct statements that follow into indirect statements, starting as indicated.

**Actual spoken statements in the present (simple and progressive)**

JANE: 'I need to go shopping.'

Jane said.....

Jane said (that) she needed to go shopping.

TOM: I'm making some tea.

Tom said.....

Tom said (that) he was making some tea.

Indirect statements: present → past

### **Actual spoken statement in the present perfect**

‘I’ve already talked to him.’

Linda said.....

Linda said (that) she had already talked to him.

‘My son has played the piano for years,’ Mrs Ellis said.

Mrs Ellis told me.....

Mrs Ellis told me (that) her son had played the piano for years.

Indirect statements: present perfect → past perfect (past perfect obligatory)

### **Actual spoken statements in the past (simple and progressive)**

‘I went to the cinema.’

He said.....

He said (that) he went/had gone to the cinema.

‘I was preparing my presentation.’

She said.....

She said (that) she was preparing/had been preparing her presentation.

‘I worked in Canada in the 1990’s,’ my father said.

My father said.....

My father said (that) he (had) worked in Canada in the 1990’s.

‘I had been waiting for hours before you arrived.’

He said.....

He said (that) he had been working for hours. (past perfect does not change)

Indirect statements: past → past or past perfect (past perfect optional)

If the verb in the original statement was in the simple past, we do not usually need to change it to the past perfect (unless we wish to emphasize that one event happened before another).

### **Actual spoken statements with the ‘present’ form of modals**

‘I can go there any time.’

He said.....

He said (that) he could go there any time.

‘I’ll see you later.’

She said.....

She said (that) she would see me later.

Indirect statements: modal ‘present’ → ‘conditional’ or ‘past’

### **Actual spoken statements with the ‘past’ or ‘conditional’ form of modals**

‘I could help you.’

He said.....

He said (that) he could help me.

‘I would buy it if I were you.’

He said.....  
He said (that) he would buy it if he were me.

**backshift** = moving back of tenses

A useful general rule is 'present becomes past and past becomes past perfect'. 'Past' modals and the past perfect are unchanged when reported, since no further backshift is possible. We must usually use the past perfect to report a statement whose verb was in the present perfect.

Pronoun changes

Time and place changes

now	→ immediately/then
two days ago	→ two days before/earlier
today	→ that day
tonight	→ that night
tomorrow	→ the next/the following day
yesterday	→ the previous day/the day before
last night	→ the night before
here	→ there
this place	→ that place
these places	→ those places
come/bring	→ go/take

**Modal verbs**

'Modal present' becomes 'modal past'

- e.g. *can* becomes *could*; *will* becomes *would*; *may* becomes *might*

'I can/will/may talk to you later,' she said.  
She said.....  
She said she could/would/might talk to me later.

Shall

'I shall help her,' he said.  
He said.....  
He said he would help her.

When *shall* is used with future reference for prediction, speculation, etc. it becomes *would* in indirect speech.

'Shall we help you?' they asked.  
They asked.....  
They asked whether they should help me.

When *shall* is used in offers, suggestions or requests for advice it becomes *should*.

should/shouldn't

'You should do it now,' she told me.

She told me.....  
She told me I should do it immediately.

When *should* or *shouldn't* refer to desirability, obligation or likelihood, they remain unchanged in indirect speech.

'If I were you, I should get another lawyer.'  
He said.....  
He said (that) if he were me, he would get another lawyer.

*Should* used in place of *would*, e.g. in conditional sentences, becomes *would*.

would, could, might, ought to, needn't have, used to  
'I would like an appointment tomorrow,' I said to my doctor.  
I told my doctor.....  
I told my doctor (that) I would like an appointment the next day.

'You ought to help your parents,' his sister told him.  
His sister told him.....  
His sister told him (that) he ought to help his parents.

These remain unchanged in indirect speech in all combinations.

'perfect' and 'past' modal forms  
'She must have done it yesterday,' I said.  
I said.....  
I said that she must have done it the previous day.

Forms such as *must have* and *could have* remain unchanged.

must  
'I must warn you of the consequences,' he said.  
He told me.....  
He told me he must/had to warn me of the consequences.

When referring to the past, *must* can remain unchanged in indirect speech when it is used to indicate inescapable obligation. Or we can use *had to* in its place.

'We must go early tomorrow,' she said.  
She said.....  
She said they must go early the next day. (or She said they would have to go/they had to go...)

*Must*, indicating future necessity, can remain unchanged, or can be replaced by *would have to* or sometimes *had to*.

'Jane must be crazy to do such a thing,' he said.  
He said.....  
He said Jane must be crazy to do such a thing.

When *must* is used to indicate deduction or possibility, it remains unchanged in indirect speech. It cannot be replaced by *had to*.

'You mustn't cheat,' the teacher said.  
The teacher said.....  
The teacher said we mustn't cheat.

*Mustn't* remains unchanged.

### needn't

'You needn't go shopping tomorrow,' my mother said.  
My mother said.....  
My mother said I needn't go/didn't have to go shopping the next day.

*Needn't* (absence of necessity) can remain unchanged or can be replaced by *didn't have to* in indirect speech.

### **Conditional sentences**

Type 1 conditional statements are reported as follows

'If you help me now, I will help you tomorrow,' she said.  
She said that.....  
She said that if I helped her then, she would help me the next day.

Type 2 conditional statements are reported as follows

'If you helped me now, I would help you tomorrow,' she said.  
She said that.....  
She said that if I helped her then, she would help me the following day.

Type 3 conditional statements are reported as follows

'If you had helped me, I would have helped you, too,' she said.  
She said that.....  
She said that if I had helped her, she would have helped me, too.