

Error Spotting Capsule 8 in PDF: Conditional Sentences

If you are preparing for competitive exams of **Banking, SSC, etc.** like (IBPS Clerk, IBPS PO, SBI Clerk, SBI PO, SSC CGL, SSC CHSL, RRB NTPC, RBI, LIC AAO, etc.) you will encounter English Language and Comprehension sections. One of the most important aspects of the English section, in any exam, is to **learn to Spot Errors and Correct Sentences**. These **Error Spotting and Sentence Correction Grammar** Capsules are aimed at helping you learn a little bit of Grammar every day. Let us start with Error Spotting Capsule 8 which deals with the concept of "**Conditional Sentences**". You can even download **Error Spotting Capsule 8** as PDF.

What are Conditional Sentences?

As the name suggests, 'conditional sentences' are the ones that talk about a 'precondition' or a 'constraint'. E.g. *If you go eat healthy food, you will never fall sick.* Conditional sentences often have 'if' in them as they talk about conditions and stipulations.

Error Spotting Capsule 8 - If + 'would' or 'would have'

Statement: *"If you studied well, you would pass this time... No, you would have passed this time."*

Question: What do you think should be in the above line? Would or Would have???

To know the answer to the above question, you will need to know the **rules** which are followed while making conditional sentences. We have given all such rules below.

Conditional Sentences - Grammatical Rules for Structuring

The table below has all the grammatical rules you need to know to follow to make conditional sentences. You can put this table in your study area to look at it from time to time.

<u>If clause</u>	<u>Main clause</u>
Simple present <i>If he doesn't call me</i>	will/shall/may+V1 <i>I will certainly call him</i>
Simple past <i>If it rained</i>	would/should/could/might+V2 <i>It would be fun</i>
Past perfect <i>If I had money</i>	would/should/could/might+have+V3 <i>I would have helped you</i>

After memorizing the rules, understand the types, purpose & meaning of each rule given below

Types of conditional sentences

Conditional sentences are of three types based on their purpose

1. A conditional sentence which indicates a **possible condition**

2. A conditional sentence which indicates an **improbable condition**
3. A conditional sentence which indicates an **impossible condition**

1) Possible condition

If you exercise regularly, you can stay fit.

What does the above sentence mean?

- It talks about something which **can certainly happen**. If you exercise regularly, you can certainly remain fit. It's a possible condition.

2) Improbable condition

If you wrote the exam, you would get the first rank.

- Okay, you didn't appear for the exam. But if you had written the exam, you could have gotten the first rank.
- No need to worry. Next time, you can.

An improbable condition talks about something happened in the past which can be done again in the future.

3) Impossible condition

If I had reached the station on time, I would have attended Rima's wedding.

- The person didn't reach the station on time and because of which s/he missed his/her train or bus.
- It is not possible to attend Rima's wedding. IMPOSSIBLE!

There are some 'once in a lifetime' opportunities. If we miss them, never again we will be able to do them. When we miss such opportunities, we can only describe them using the third if conditional sentence - the impossible condition which comes with a lot of regret and guilt.

Error Spotting Capsule 8 - Using Rules for Each Type

Rules to know...

Case 1 - Verb of the 'if clause' is in the 'be' form

- When the verb of the 'if clause' is in the 'be' form, the verb must be 'were' regardless of the subject.
 - If *I were* a bird, I could fly.
 - If *he were* here, we could practice for tomorrow.
- Have you noticed that in the main clause the modal verb used is '**could**'? Why so? What is the tense of the 'if clause'? Simple past (were). When the 'if clause' is in the simple past tense, the verb of the main clause must be in the past tense. (Refer the table given above.)

Case 2 - Double negatives

- When both the clauses of a conditional sentence are negative, instead of 'if' 'unless' is used.
 - If he doesn't tell me, I won't talk to him (**Wrong usage in formal English**)
 - Unless he tells me, I will not talk to him. (**Correct**)

Case 3 - The comma

- A comma is used to separate the clauses only when the 'if clause' comes first.
 - We could attract more **tourists** **if** we provided better comfort.
 - If we provided better **comfort**, **we** could attract more tourists.

Let's practice now

Spot the error in the following sentences

1. If she has the ability, she can solve this problem.
2. You can ask her, if you have any doubt.
3. I won't go there if they don't invite me.
4. You could get it if you will come early.

Explanations...!!!

1. No error. Proper tense: both clauses are in the simple present tense. Proper usage of the comma.
2. You can ask **her, if her if** you have any doubt. Unnecessary comma in a complex sentence.
3. I won't go there **if unless** they invite me. When both clauses are negative, 'if' and 'not' in the 'if clause' are replaced by 'unless'.
4. You could get it if you **will come came** early. As the main clause is in the past tense, the 'if clause' cannot be in the future tense.

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