

## A Detailed Description of First Conditionals by a Student

*Today, Rachel is in a better mood. Her English lesson was better than yesterday's. She thinks she understood more when the teacher gave a detailed description of First Conditionals. Takondwa, her best friend, is happy for her of course!*

**Takondwa:** You see, it wasn't that bad today.

**Rachel:** I survived!

**Takondwa:** You participated a lot in class today — that was very good.

**Rachel:** Thank you Takondwa. I think I might start liking English Grammar lessons now. I can even tell you what we learnt today!

**Takondwa:** Really? I am surprised Rachel. Do you want to become an English teacher? Don't you want to be a top model anymore?

**Rachel:** Ha, ha, ha. No Takondwa. I don't think teaching is my calling yet but let me have a go at it today. Just today, okay?

*(Rachel takes a deep breath)*

**Rachel:** All right, here we go. Yesterday's lesson was about **Zero Conditionals**, right?

**Takondwa (Smiling):** Yes...

**Rachel:** An example of a Zero Conditional is "If you eat too much, you gain weight."

**Takondwa:** Yes. go on...

**Rachel:** You see Takondwa, there are two situations here. The first one is "**EAT TOO MUCH**" (*the cause or the condition*) and the second one is "**GAIN WEIGHT**" (*the result*). Both verbs are in the **Simple Present** because we are talking about a general truth.

**Takondwa:** Yes, that's right. It looks like you didn't forget anything. Wow Rachel, you are going to become an English teacher!

**Rachel:** Ha, ha, ha. Don't be silly Takondwa. Well, where was I?

**Takondwa:** I think you were about to give me a detailed or extensive description of **First Conditionals**.

**Rachel:** Yes, that's right. **First Conditionals** are a little bit like **Zero Conditionals**. They both have two situations whereby one situation is dependent on the other. **Situation B** can happen only if **Situation A** takes place. The difference lies in the fact that the verb in situation B is in the **Future Tense**. The result of Situation A will **possibly** or **probably** take place in the future. They are called **First Conditionals** because they come after **Zero Conditionals**.

**Takondwa:** Mmmh, I think I don't really understand. Can you give me an example?

**Rachel:** Okay, here it is: "***If I do well in this exam, my parents will be happy.***" This is a specific or particular situation.

**Takondwa:** So...

**Rachel:** It's different from the following **Zero Conditional** sentence: "***If you do well in exams, parents are happy.***" In this sentence you can even add at the beginning: "***Generally speaking, if you do well in exams, parents are happy.***" You can also use **WHEN** here instead of **IF**. "***When you do well in exams, parents are happy.***"

**Takondwa:** What about: *If I will see you, I will be happy.*"

**Rachel:** No Takondwa, that's incorrect. The verb that is in the **If-clause** should be in the **Simple Present** and the modal verb that is in the **main clause** should be in the **Future Tense**. Let me correct your sentence now:

*If I see you, I will be happy."*

**Takondwa:** Ha, ha, ha. Rachel, today you weren't sleeping in class, I can tell that very well. Okay, Rachel, here is a tough one. What is a **clause**?

**Rachel:** No, I wasn't sleeping at all, ha, ha, ha. The lesson was quite interesting, I should say. Well, your question is very easy. A **clause** is a group of words that has a **Subject** and a **Verb**. In the previous example I gave you, **I** is the **Subject** (*the one who does the action*) and **See** is the **Verb** (*the action*). **See you** is the **Predicate** which consists of a **Verb** and an **Object** (*the one that is acted upon*).

**Takondwa:** All right, that's good. What is a **Main Clause** then?

**Rachel:** A **Main Clause** is a group of words containing a **Subject** and a **Predicate** that can make full sense on its own. We say that it can stand alone. Whereas, the **If-clause** starts with **IF** — this is why we call it the **IF-Clause**. This is not a **Main Clause** because it is dependent on another group of words. "*If I see you*" doesn't make sense on its own. It's incomplete.

**Takondwa:** Give me more examples about **First Conditionals**.

**Rachel:** No problem, I will give you five.

1. *If I **leave** now, I **will** be able to catch the bus.*
2. *If you **beat** me, you'**ll** regret that for the rest of your life!*
3. *If they **come**, we **will** tell them to come back tomorrow.*
4. *If you **buy** this, you **won't** have any money left in your bank account.*
5. *If you **eat** this uncooked chicken, you'**ll** get severe stomach cramps.*

**Takondwa:** Well Rachel, I am impressed. You left no stone unturned...

**Rachel:** I know, I know Takondwa. I think I'm beginning to like this. I'm getting good at this actually.

Tomorrow I will explain to you what Second Conditionals are.

**Takondwa:** Well, Rachel. I'm really looking forward to this!

**Rachel:** Thank you!



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