

A Not So Boring Dialogue about Zero Conditionals

Rachel is furious. She has just finished her English lesson about Zero Conditionals and she feels that did not understand anything. However, Takondwa, her best friend, enjoyed the teacher's explanations.

Rachel: Can you believe it Takondwa? What a waste of time! We could as well have spent a good time at the hair saloon. Why would somebody want to talk about conditioners for a whole class period?

Takondwa: Ha, ha, ha! Rachel, really? Is this the Rachel I know? The teacher didn't say anything about conditioners. I think she said '**Conditionals**' Rachel. Not **conditioners**, you know, like in 'hair conditioner.'

Rachel: I know Takondwa, I'm not dumb. Anyway, seriously speaking, what did you get from that lesson?

Takondwa: A lot. I can lend you my notes if you want. We can also talk about them.

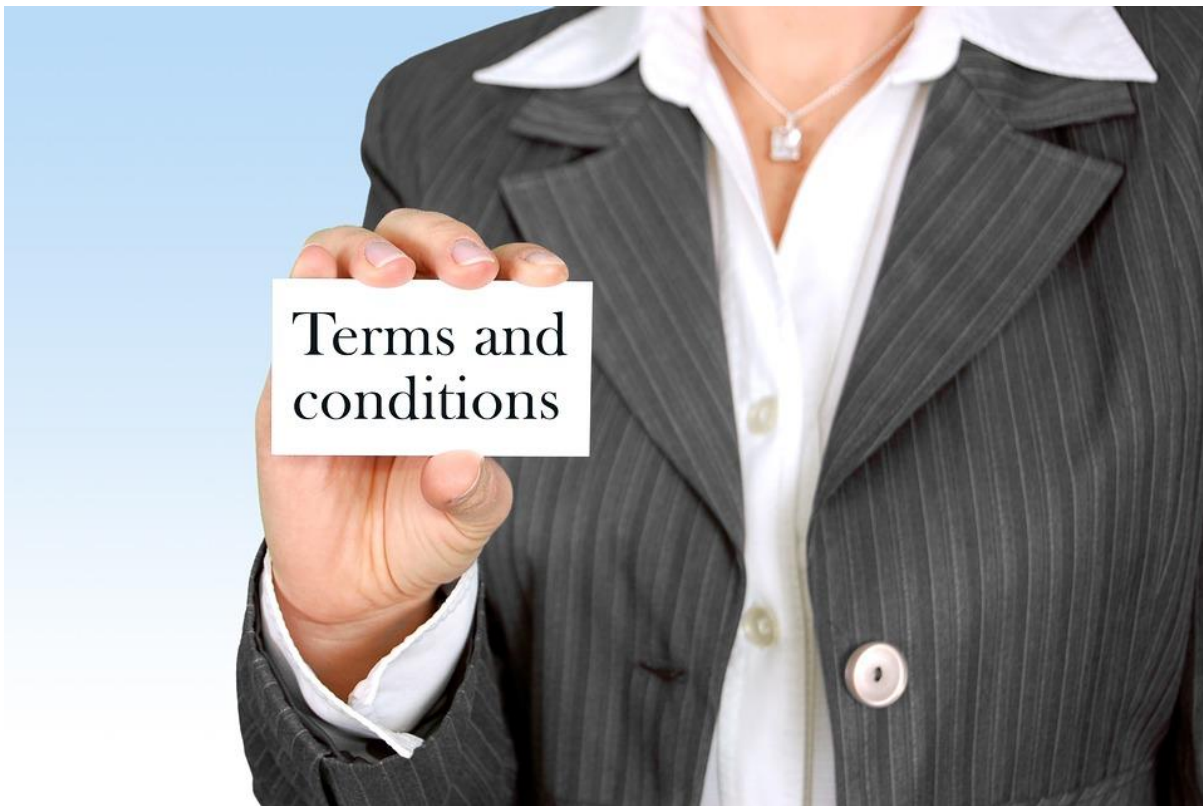
(Takondwa shows her friend what she wrote. Rachel is both impressed and relieved.)

Rachel: Phew! You don't even know how happy I am. I thought I was going to fail my English exam.

Takondwa: You know, **Conditionals** are actually very easy to understand.

Rachel: Really? Why are they called **Conditionals** in the first place?

Takondwa: They come from the word '**Condition**'. It is something that must exist before anything else happens.



Rachel: What do you mean?

Takondwa: Let's say that you have two situations: Situation A and Situation B. Situation A can be the condition that is necessary for Situation B to exist, to be.

Rachel: Oh, I get it. Let's say that Situation A is equivalent to a good learning environment. Consequently, Situation B will be equivalent to students passing their exams with flying colours!

Takondwa: Yes Takondwa. It's just like a '**cause and effect**' thing. Situation A is the condition that brings about the result in Situation B.

Rachel: All right, now I start to get it. So why do we have **Zero, First, Second, Third Conditionals**...

Takondwa: I think it was just a practical way to name this phenomenon. In English Grammar, you have to give proper names to whatever point you are dealing with. Otherwise, everybody will just come up with their own names. That's a recipe for confusion.

Rachel: Maybe for **Conditionals**, they thought about levels. They started from the easiest (**zero conditionals**), which is like the bottom of steps, and then they climbed higher with **First, Second and Third Conditionals**, depending on the difficulty.

Takondwa: It's possible. I think it's very likely that they did it this way.



Rachel: I have a nice suggestion.

Takondwa: Okay, what is it?

Rachel: Let's try to find as many examples of **Zero Conditionals** as we can.

Takondwa: That's a great idea. Remember that we use the **Simple Present**, both in Situation A and Situation B. It's logical since we usually use this tense when talking about general truths. The sun shines — this is true all the time. All right, let's make some sentences then. Are we going to be time-limited?

Rachel: Yes, we can be time-limited. Is five minutes okay? Don't worry, I won't forget about the **Simple Present**.

Takondwa: No problem. I will start then! If you use conditioner at least once a week, your hair becomes soft and healthy.

Rachel: Ha, ha. ha. Good one! You used the **Simple Present** in both situations — very good! My turn! If there is a good learning environment, students thrive.

Takondwa: Wow, wow, wow! Incredible. I think I can do better! When somebody does something incredible, you emulate him or her.

Rachel: That's true! Let's see what I can come up with. I have two sentences actually. If you work hard, you get better and better. If you don't work hard, you fail your exams.

Takondwa: I agree with you. If you talk too much in class, you get punished by the teacher.

Rachel: Yes! Last one! If you speak English every day, your accent improves!

Takondwa: Very good! So what do you think about **Zero Conditionals** now?

Rachel: I think they are great! I loved this dialogue about Zero Conditionals! I am really looking forward to tomorrow's lesson!

Takondwa: Me too!

