

First and second conditional in negotiations games

Work in groups of two or three. One person chooses one of the proposals below. Think about how you could complete that proposal with a request for your partner to do something for you in return. Think very carefully about which tense is needed for that proposal:

- First conditional for real, possible or likely proposals
- Second conditional for imaginary, impossible or unlikely proposals

Which tense you need might depend on you, the person who you are speaking to, and your relationship, so bear in mind that this is a real communication between the two of you, not a roleplay.

When you have decided on a yes/ no question proposing an exchange (in the right tense), try to guess what your partner's reaction will be to that proposal. If you think that your partner will accept your proposal, secretly put a tick in the "Yes" column next to that proposal. If you think that they will reject what you offer and ask for, secretly write a cross (X) in the "No" column. If you think they won't give a clear yes or no answer, put a question mark (?) in the "Maybe/ It depends" column. Ask the question that you made, listen to your partner's reaction, then show them which response you predicted. Then switch roles and do the same.

Useful phrases for saying it depends/ maybe

"I might be able to accept that if/ as long as/ providing..."

"I can accept that unless..."

Ask about any phrases below which you don't understand or can't make a sentence out of, discussing which tense would be most suitable between you and your partner each time.

Play the same game, but this time continuing your discussion until you get the response that you predicted, e.g. trying to persuade your partner if you expected a positive answer but got a negative answer.

Do the same thing the other way round. Think of a proposal ("If I..." etc) that could go together with the requests on the bottom sheet below, secretly write down what you think your partner's response will be, ask the question, then compare their answer to what you predicted.

What function does this third conditional response have in a negotiation?

"I would have been able to if you had told me earlier"

Use as many conditional forms as you can while you roleplay a whole negotiation. You get one point for each time that you say "if", "providing", "unless" or "as long as".

Making requests and predicting responses version

Proposal	+ request/ desire/ what your partner could do in response	Predicted reaction by your partner		
		Yes	No	Maybe/ It depends
bring you some lunch next week				
cook some traditional food for you				
double your budget				
give you a free gift with my company's name on it				
give you a free... worth 10 dollars				
give you a lift (= a ride) to the supermarket				
give you a million pounds				
give you a promotion				
give you a superpower				
give you a very good evaluation				
give you extra paid leave next year				
give you some good investment advice				
give you two weeks to finish (...)				
lend you a book written in my language				
lend you my car				
let you finish early today				
pay for your coffee				
pay for your petrol and parking				
promise you a 5% ROI (= return on investment)				
recommend a good baker's to you				
recommend a good place to go on holiday				
say it can save your company millions of dollars				
threaten to sue your company				

Making proposals and predicting responses version

If...	Request/ Desire	Predicted reaction		
		Yes	No	?
	allow me to employ ten (more) people			
	arrange three English classes a week			
	cancel next week's lesson(s)			
	come in to work at 7 a.m. on Monday			
	do extra preparation before the next lesson			
	give me a budget of \$7 million for my project			
	give me a full refund			
	give me a pay rise of ten times the rate of inflation			
	give me a perfect evaluation			
	give me a permanent job			
	give me one year's unpaid leave (= a sabbatical)			
	give me ten weeks' paid holiday next year			
	give me two more weeks to finish (...)			
	invest in my start-up			
	join me in a new business venture			
	lend me five dollars			
	let me use your credit card			
	let me use your house			
	let me work from home (= telecommute)			
	move abroad (= move overseas)			
	move departments			
	move this lesson to Saturdays			
	offer a discount of 40%			
	pay for me to take some training			
	pay for me to travel to...			
	proofread a report for me			
	put me in charge of a large(r) project			
	put me in charge of your personal finances			
	relocate to Siberia			
	share an office			
	sign a five-year contract for English lessons			
	take charge of relocating the call centre to India			
	tell me every detail of your company's next product			
	tell me some famous jokes from your country			