We use several different structures to express a condition in English. The most common among these structures are explained here.

**By using if**

If is commonly used to express a condition. Examples are given below:

- If you give respect, you get respect.
- If you heat ice, it melts.
- If you had asked him, he would have helped you.
- If he worked hard, you would pass the examination.

Note that *if* is sometimes omitted in conditional clauses. In that case, we begin the sentence with the auxiliary verb *had, should or were*.

Compare:

- If I were you I wouldn’t waste this opportunity.
- Were I you, I wouldn't waste this opportunity.

- If you had been there we could have sorted the things out.
  Had you been there we could have sorted the things out.

- If you meet my brother tell him that I have passed the test.
  Should you meet my brother tell him that I have passed the test.

**By using unless**

*Unless* is also used to express a condition. Note that unless means if not.

- Unless you agree to my terms and conditions, you can’t expect any help from me. (= If you do not agree to my terms and conditions, you can’t expect any help from me.)
- Unless you take the medicine, you can’t get well. (=If you do not take the medicine, you can’t get well.)
- Unless you work hard, you will not pass. (=If you do not work hard you will not pass.)

**By using an imperative**

Sometimes we express a condition by using an imperative.

- Take one step further and see what happens.

**By using a conjunctonal phrase**
A condition can be expressed by using conjunctional phrases such as **in case**.

- **In case** it rains, I shall put on my rain coat.
- **In case** you are not satisfied with the product, you can send it back.

**By using a participial phrase**

- **Supposing** you don’t win the prize, what will you do?
  I will buy the house **provided** that it is in good condition.

Note that the same idea can be expressed in several different ways. Study the examples given below:

- I will buy that house **if** it is in good condition.
- I will not buy that house **unless** it is in good condition.
- **In case** that house is in good condition I will buy it.
- **Supposing** the house is in good condition, I will buy it.