

Detailed English Grammar Summary

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1. The Zero Conditional

Definition

We use the **Zero Conditional** to talk about things that are **always true**, such as scientific facts, general truths, and habits.

The structure for the Zero Conditional is: **If + Present Simple, ... Present Simple** The 'if' clause (condition) and the 'main' clause (result) both use the present simple tense.

- *If you **heat** water to 100 degrees Celsius, it **boils**.* (Scientific fact)
- *If I **drink** too much coffee, I **get** a headache.* (Habit / Personal truth)
- *Plants **die** if they **don't get** enough water.* (General truth)

In the Zero Conditional, 'if' and 'when' can almost always be used interchangeably because the result is certain.

- ***When** you heat water to 100 degrees, it boils.*
- ***When** I drink too much coffee, I get a headache.*

2. The First Conditional

Definition

We use the **First Conditional** to talk about a **real and possible situation in the future**. It describes a likely result if a certain condition happens.

The structure for the First Conditional is: **If + Present Simple, ... will + base verb (Future Simple)** The 'if' clause (condition) uses the present simple, but the 'main' clause (result) uses the future simple.

- *If it **rains** tomorrow, we **will cancel** the picnic.* (Possible future event)
- *If you **study** hard, you **will pass** the exam.* (Likely result)
- *She **will be** late if her train **is** delayed.* (The order of clauses can be swapped)

Instead of 'will', we can also use other modal verbs or the imperative form in the main clause to express different meanings:

- **Imperative (Command):** *If you **see** John, **tell** him to call me.*
- **May/Might (Possibility):** *If it's sunny, we **might go** to the park.*
- **Can (Ability/Permission):** *If you **finish** your work, you **can leave** early.*

3. Compound Nouns

Definition

A **Compound Noun** is a noun that is made up of two or more words. These words come together to act as a single noun. It can be formed with (noun + noun), (adjective + noun), (verb + noun), and other combinations.

3.1. Three Forms of Compound Nouns

Compound nouns can be written in three different ways:

1. **Closed (Solid):** The words are joined together with no space.
2. **Hyphenated:** The words are joined by a hyphen.
3. **Open (Spaced):** The words are separate, but are read as a single concept.

Closed (Solid)	Hyphenated	Open (Spaced)
bedroom	mother-in-law	bus stop
sunflower	check-in	high school
football	self-esteem	swimming pool
keyboard	T-shirt	living room
homework	x-ray	ice cream

To make a compound noun plural, we usually pluralize the **main noun** (the most significant word).

- **Closed:** 'bedroom' → 'bedrooms'
- **Hyphenated:** 'mother-in-law' → 'mothers-in-law'
- **Open:** 'bus stop' → 'bus stops'

If there is no clear main noun (e.g., in verb-based compounds), the plural 's' usually goes at the end. (e.g., 'check-in' → 'check-ins').

4. Modal Verbs (Present)

Definition

Modal Verbs (or 'modals') are auxiliary verbs (helping verbs) that express a specific meaning, such as ability, permission, obligation, possibility, or advice.

1. They are always followed by the **base form** of the verb (e.g., "he *can* go", not "he *can* goes").
2. They do not add '-s' for the third person singular (e.g., "she *can*", not "she *cans*").
3. To make them negative, we add 'not' after the modal (e.g., "you *should not*").

4.1. Common Modals and Their Present Uses

Modal Verb	Primary Use(s)	Example(s)
can	1. Ability (present) 2. Permission (informal)	<i>I can speak English.</i> <i>Can I use your phone?</i>
could	1. Polite Permission (present) (Also used for past ability)	<i>Could I ask a question?</i> <i>I could swim when I was 5.</i>
may	1. Permission (formal) 2. Possibility (present/future)	<i>May I sit here?</i> <i>It may rain later.</i>
might	1. Possibility (present/future) (Often implies less certainty)	<i>He might be busy.</i> <i>Take an umbrella, it might rain.</i>
must	1. Obligation / Necessity (strong) 2. Logical Conclusion	<i>You must stop at a red light.</i> <i>He hasn't slept. He must be tired.</i>
must not	1. Prohibition (strong "don't")	<i>You must not smoke here.</i>
have to (Semi-modal)	1. Obligation / Necessity (Often for external rules)	<i>I have to go to work.</i> <i>She has to wear a uniform.</i>
don't/doesn't have to	1. Lack of Obligation	<i>You don't have to pay.</i> <i>(It's not necessary).</i>
should	1. Advice / Recommendation 2. Expectation	<i>You should see a doctor.</i> <i>He should be here by 10 AM.</i>
ought to	1. Advice (stronger, more formal)	<i>You ought to apologize.</i>
will	1. Future Intention / Promise 2. Willingness (present)	<i>I will help you.</i> <i>Will you open the door for me?</i>
shall	1. Suggestion (with I/we) 2. Formal Obligation	<i>Shall we go to the cinema?</i> <i>All employees shall attend.</i>