Unless and Conditional Conjunctions: Requirements and Future Conditions

INTERMEDIATE

> **Focus: Meaning 'except if', Negative conditional logic, As long as / Provided (that), Present simple for future meaning, Avoiding 'will' after conjunctions.**

In English, we use specific conjunctions to connect a condition (the requirement) with a result (the future outcome). When talking about the future, these conjunctions follow a strict grammar rule regarding verb tenses.

1. The "Golden Rule" for Future Conditions

When you use a conjunction to set a condition for the future, you must use the **Present Simple** tense in the clause following the conjunction. You **never** use *will* immediately after these words.

- **Correct:** *I will go **unless** it **rains***. (Present Simple)
- **Incorrect:** ~~I will go unless it will rain.~~

2. Unless (Meaning: "If... not" / "Except if")

Unless is used to express a negative condition. It means "except if". Because *unless* already contains a negative meaning, we usually use an affirmative verb after it.

- *I won't pay **unless** you **finish** the job.*
  - *Logic:* I will not pay **if** you **do not** finish the job.

3. Conditional Conjunctions of Requirement

These phrases are similar to "if" but are stronger. They mean "on the condition that" or "only if".

- **As long as / So long as:** Emphasizes that the condition is strictly required.
  - *You can stay **as long as** you **are** quiet.*

- **Provided (that) / Providing (that):** Slightly more formal.
  - *We will arrive on time **provided** the traffic **is** not bad.*

4. Sentence Structure

- **Clause 1 (Condition):** Conjunction + Present Simple
- **Clause 2 (Result):** Future Simple (will/won't) / Modal Verb (can/must)

Result Clause (Future/Modal)	Conjunction	Condition Clause (Present Simple)
I **will buy** it	**provided**	it **is** cheap.
They **won't come**	**unless**	you **invite** them.

Practice Exercises

Instruction: Complete the sentences using the correct form of the verb in parentheses. Pay close attention to whether the gap is in the **Condition Clause** (Present Simple) or the **Result Clause** (Future/Modal).

- For **negatives**, use the cue (not/verb).
- For **questions**, use the cue (subject/verb).

1. You can borrow my car as long as you _____ (drive) carefully.

2. _____ (they/cancel) the match unless the rain stops?

3. I will sign the contract provided that there _____ (not/be) any hidden fees.

4. Unless he _____ (apologize) soon, I will not speak to him again.

5. We _____ (not/start) the meeting as long as the director is absent.

6. You won't lose weight as long as you _____ (not/stop) eating so much sugar.

7. Provided that she _____ (get) the visa on time, she will travel next week.

8. What _____ (you/do) provided they offer you the job?

9. We will play football tomorrow providing the weather _____ (stay) sunny.

10. The bank _____ (not/lend) you the money unless you have a steady job.

11. You can keep the puppy as long as your mother _____ (not/mind).

12. Where _____ (he/stay) unless he finds a hotel before nightfall?

13. Unless you _____ (hurry), you will miss the last bus home.

14. She _____ (succeed) in the competition providing that she continues to train hard.

15. _____ (we/go) to the beach this weekend as long as it is warm?

Answer Key

1. **drive** (Present Simple after *as long as*)

2. **Will they cancel** (Future Question in main clause)

3. **are not / aren't** (Present Simple negative after *provided that*)

4. **apologizes** (Present Simple after *unless*)

5. **will not start / won't start** (Future Negative in main clause)

6. **do not stop / don't stop** (Present Simple negative after *as long as*)

7. **gets** (Present Simple after *provided that*)

8. **will you do** (Future Question in main clause)

9. **stays** (Present Simple after *providing*)

10. **will not lend / won't lend** (Future Negative in main clause)

11. **does not mind / doesn't mind** (Present Simple negative after *as long as*)

12. **will he stay** (Future Question in main clause)

13. **hurry** (Present Simple after *unless*)

14. **will succeed** (Future Affirmative in main clause)

15. **Will we go** (Future Question in main clause)