

Future Time Clauses: Sequence and Conditionals

INTERMEDIATE

Focus: Present simple for future reference, When / After / Before / While, Avoiding 'will' in time clauses, Sequence of events, Completed actions before others, When / After / Until / As soon as + have done, Using 'if' for possibility, Using 'when' for certainty, Future conditions, Immediate future actions

1. The Golden Rule of Future Time Clauses

When we talk about the future using time conjunctions (like **when**, **after**, **before**, **until**, **as soon as**, **while**) or the conditional **if**, we use a specific grammar pattern.

- **Main Clause:** Uses **Future Simple** (*will / won't*) or an Imperative.
- **Time/If Clause:** Uses **Present Simple** (or Present Perfect). **NEVER** use 'will' in the time clause.

Conjunction	Time Clause (NO 'WILL')	Main Clause (Future Result)
If	If it rains tomorrow,	we will stay at home.
When	When I arrive at the hotel,	I will call you.
As soon as	As soon as she finishes work,	she will drive home.
Until	We won't start dinner	until he comes back.

2. Present Perfect in Time Clauses

We can use the **Present Perfect** (*have/has + past participle*) instead of the Present Simple in the time clause. This emphasizes that the first action must be **completely finished** before the second action happens.

- **Structure:** **After / When / As soon as** + Subject + **have/has done**...
- **Example:** "We will leave as soon as we **have finished** our project." (The project must be 100% complete first).
- **Example:** "After I **have written** the report, I **will send** it to the boss."

3. If vs. When: Possibility vs. Certainty

- **When:** Use this for things that are **certain** to happen.
 - **Example:** "**When** I get home tonight..." (I am definitely going home).
- **If:** Use this for things that are **possible**, but not certain.
 - **Example:** "**If** I see John..." (I might see him, or I might not).

4. Word Order

You can switch the order of the clauses. If the **Time/If clause** comes first, use a comma.

- **Before** you go, please sign this. (Comma needed)
- Please sign this **before** you go. (No comma needed)

Practice Exercises

Instruction: Complete the sentences using the correct form of the verbs in brackets. You must decide whether to use the **Present Simple**, **Present Perfect**, or the **Future Simple (will)** based on the rules.

- *Remember: Do not use 'will' inside the time clause (after words like if, when, before, until, as soon as).*

1. I _____ (call) you as soon as I _____ (arrive) at the airport.
2. _____ (you/buy) that car if you _____ (get) the promotion?
3. We _____ (not/wait) for them if they _____ (be) late again.
4. After I _____ (have/finish) my homework, I _____ (watch) a movie.
5. She _____ (not/move) to London until she _____ (find) a good job there.
6. What _____ (he/do) when he _____ (leave) school next year?
7. If it _____ (not/stop) raining soon, we _____ (cancel) the picnic.
8. Please _____ (turn off) the lights before you _____ (go) out.
9. When I _____ (see) him tomorrow, I _____ (tell) him the news.
10. They _____ (not/release) the product until they _____ (have/test) it thoroughly.
11. _____ (Sarah/come) to the party if we _____ (invite) her?
12. I _____ (lend) you the book as soon as I _____ (read) it.
13. He _____ (not/be) happy when he _____ (hear) about the accident.
14. Where _____ (you/stay) while you _____ (be) in Paris next month?
15. If you _____ (not/water) the plants, they _____ (die).

| Answer Key

1. will call / arrive (or *have arrived*)
2. Will you buy / get
3. won't wait / are
4. have finished / will watch
5. won't move / finds (or *has found*)
6. will he do / leaves
7. doesn't stop / will cancel
8. turn off / go
9. see / will tell
10. won't release / have tested
11. Will Sarah come / invite
12. will lend / have read (or *read*)
13. won't be / hears
14. will you stay / are
15. don't water / will die