

<https://www.espressoenglish.net/first-conditional-when-as-soon-as-unless/>

First Conditional: When, As Soon As, Unless



“I’ll call you as soon as I arrive!”

[Click here to review the First Conditional.](#)

It is possible to use other words instead of **if** in first conditional sentences:

ALTERNATIVE TO “IF”	WHY USE IT?	EXAMPLE
When	When the “condition” will definitely happen.	When I die, I’ll leave all my money to charity.
As soon as	To emphasize immediacy	This situation is very urgent. I’ll call you as soon as I have more information.
Unless	In place of “if not”	You’ll fail the test unless you study. = You’ll fail the test if you don’t study.

Let’s study each case separately.

When: When the “condition” will definitely happen in the future.

Look at the difference between these two sentences:

- **If** I see Sam, I'll give him your message. (I'm not sure if I will see him or not)
- **When** I see Sam, I'll give him your message. (I will *definitely* see Sam)

As soon as: To emphasize immediacy.

- My feet hurt! **As soon as** I get home, I'm going to take off these high heels.
- **As soon as** we have enough money saved, we'll take a vacation to Costa Rica. We can't wait!
- I'll respond to your e-mail **as soon as** I can.

Unless: Substitute for "if not."

- You won't lose any weight **unless** you start eating healthier food.
= You won't lose any weight **if** you **don't** start eating healthier food.
- I'm not going to dance **unless** somebody invites me.
= I'm not going to dance **if** somebody **doesn't** invite me.
- **Unless** there's an emergency at work, I'll be home on time.
= **If** there's **not** an emergency at work, I'll be home on time.