ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Conditionals – Wishes – Would Rather / Had Better Test B1 Grammar Exercises

A2 B1 Level Grammar Tests · 20 questions · Online test and questions PDF:
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Explanations

1. If I _____ very busy tomorrow, I _____ to your birthday party. I'm so sorry.
✔ **B) weren't / would come**
This is the second conditional (**if** + past simple, **would** + verb). It is used for an unreal situation now or in the future: the speaker will be busy, so he can't come. With **be** we often use **were** for all persons: **If I weren't busy, I would come.** Not **wasn't / would have come**, because **would have come** is for the past.

2. I wish she _____ me know about her visit a few days earlier, so I _____ some arrangements at work.
✔ **D) had let / could have made**
For a regret about the past, use **wish** + past perfect: **I wish she had let me know.** The result in the past is **could have** + past participle: **I could have made some arrangements.** Not **would let**, because that is about the present or future, not about something that already happened.

3. If it _____ trouble you are looking for, you _____ it very soon. Believe me!
✔ **A) is / will get**
This is the first conditional (**if** + present simple, **will** + verb) for a real possibility in the future. **Very soon** shows a future result: **If it is trouble you are looking for, you will get it.** Not **was / get**, because the meaning is real and in the future, not unreal.

4. If the Moon _____ between the Sun and the Earth, it _____ a solar eclipse.
✔ **C) passes / causes**
This is the zero conditional (**if** + present simple, present simple). We use it for scientific facts that are always true: **If the Moon passes between the Sun and the Earth, it causes a solar eclipse.** Not **passed / may cause**, because this is a fact, not an imaginary situation.

5. If only we _____ a little money every month, but unfortunately, our income _____ hardly enough.
✔ **A) could save / is**
If only + **could** expresses a wish about the present: **If only we could save a little money.** The second part describes the real situation now, so it uses the present simple: **our income is hardly enough.** Not **can save**, because after **if only** we use a past form such as **could**.

6. I'm sure they _____ still up. All their lights wouldn't be on if they _____.
✔ **D) are / were sleeping**
The first sentence is a fact the speaker is sure about now, so it uses the present: **they are still up.** The second is an unreal present (second conditional), so it uses a past form: **if they were sleeping**. Not **were / are sleeping**, because **I'm sure** needs the real present, and the if-clause needs the past.

7. If I _____ one more question correctly, I _____ the chemistry exam yesterday.
✔ **B) had answered / could have passed**
Yesterday shows an unreal situation in the past, so we use the third conditional: **if** + past perfect, **could/would have** + past participle. **If I had answered one more question correctly, I could have passed.** Not **had passed** in the result, because the result needs **could have** + past participle.

8. Make sure you _____ any noise if your brother _____ upstairs.
✔ **C) don't make / is studying**
After **make sure** we use the present simple for an instruction: **Make sure you don't make any noise.** The if-clause is a real situation happening around now, so the present continuous fits: **if your brother is studying**. Not **shouldn't make**, because **make sure** is not followed by a modal verb.

9. If you _____ the door open for me, I _____ to push the trolley in.
✔ **D) hold / will try**
This is the first conditional: **if** + present simple, **will** + verb, for a real future situation. **If you hold the door open for me, I will try to push the trolley in.** Not **can hold / try**, because the result needs **will** (a future plan), not the present simple.

10. If I _____ you, I _____ so sure about your victory yet. The score may change.
✔ **B) were / wouldn't be**
To give advice we use the second conditional: **If I were you, I wouldn't** + verb. With **I** we normally use **were**, not **was**, in this fixed phrase. Not **had been / couldn't be**, because the advice is about now, not the past.

11. If there _____ any problems you need me to help you with, do not hesitate to tell me.
✓ **B) should be**
If + **should** is a polite, formal way to talk about something that may or may not happen. It is often used with an instruction: **If there should be any problems, do not hesitate to tell me.** Not **were**, because **were** shows an unreal situation and does not go well with a polite real offer like **do not hesitate**.

12. _____ you got lost in a big foreign city, how _____ you react to the situation?
✓ **A) Suppose / would**
Suppose means 'imagine that' and is used for an imaginary situation. It is followed by a past form, and the result uses **would**: **Suppose you got lost, how would you react?** Not **Providing / can**, because **providing** means 'only if' and does not fit an imagined question.

13. You should avoid taking antibiotics _____ you really need to do so.
✓ **C) unless**
Unless means 'if not' or 'except if': **Avoid taking antibiotics unless you really need to** = take them only when you really need them. Not **if**, because **avoid taking antibiotics if you really need to** gives the opposite meaning.

14. We _____ a few dollars more and be happier now if we _____ our money on the tickets for that horrible movie.
✓ **D) would have / hadn't spent**
This is a mixed conditional: a past action (**if** + past perfect) with a result now (**would** + verb). **Now** shows the present result: **We would have more money now if we hadn't spent it on the tickets.** Not **had / don't spend**, because the spending happened in the past.

15. Britain _____ so different from the rest of Europe if it _____ isolated from the continent.
✓ **A) might not be / weren't**
This is the second conditional for an unreal present situation: Britain is isolated from the continent. The if-clause uses a past form (**weren't**), and the result uses **might/would** + verb: **Britain might not be so different.** Not **may not be / isn't**, because the situation is not real, so we need past forms.

16. Most people _____ than _____ their freedom.
✓ **D) would rather die / lose**
Would rather + base form + **than** + base form shows what someone prefers: **Most people would rather die than lose their freedom.** Not **prefer to die / losing**, because after **prefer to** we say **rather than lose**, not **than losing**.

17. I'd rather our flat _____ so far from where I work, then I _____ so much time travelling every day.
✓ **B) weren't / wouldn't waste**
When we want a different present situation, **would rather** + subject is followed by a past form: **I'd rather our flat weren't so far.** The imagined result uses **would**: **then I wouldn't waste so much time.** Not **isn't / won't waste**, because after **I'd rather** + another subject we need the past, not the present.

18. Dad looked at me angrily _____ it had been me who dropped and broke the vase.
✓ **C) as though**
As though (= **as if**) describes how something seems: Dad looked at me **as though** I had broken the vase. The past perfect shows it may not be true. Not **if only**, because that expresses a wish, not how someone looks or behaves.

19. If they _____ to live here for the rest of their lives, they _____ a flat instead of paying rent.
✓ **A) are planning / had better buy**
The if-clause is a real present plan, so the present continuous fits: **If they are planning to live here**. **Had better** + base form gives strong advice: **they had better buy a flat.** Not **would plan / had bought**, because we don't use **would** in the if-clause, and **had better** is followed by the base form.

20. _____ my son _____ less time on his computer and more time studying.
✓ **B) I wish / would spend**
I wish + someone + **would** + verb shows that we are unhappy with another person's behaviour and want it to change: **I wish my son would spend less time on his computer.** Not **If only / spends**, because after **if only** we need **would** or a past form, not the present simple.

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