THE FLATMATES

Language point:
The first conditional
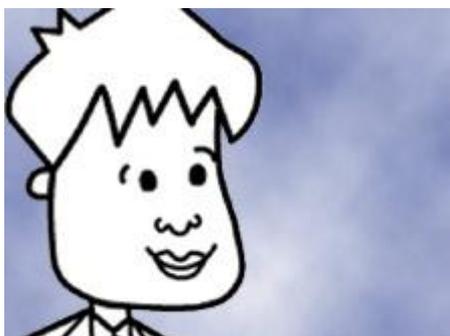
BBC Learning English – The Flatmates

The Flatmates – The first conditional

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A **conditional** is used to talk about a **possible** or **imaginary** situation (**the condition**) and the **consequences** (or **the result**) of it.

The first conditional - meaning
We use the **first conditional** to talk about something that **will happen** (the result), **if** a particular **condition** (which is **likely to happen**) is met. Because the manager is asking Tim to work in the stockroom, it's **likely** that Tim will do it and that's why we use the **first conditional** here. In order to get an interview, Tim has to work in the stockroom. **If** you **do** this for me, **you'll have** a chance of promotion. **If** Tim **works** in the stock room, **he will get** an interview. **If** Tim **doesn't work** in the stock room, **he won't get** an interview. So, the meaning is that if the condition is met (and it's more than 50% likely to happen) then the result will happen.

The first conditional – form	
The first conditional is made up of **the condition** (the **'if'** part of the sentence) and **the consequence** or **the result**.	
The condition	**The consequence or result**
If + **present simple,**	**will** + **base verb**
If Tim **works** in the stock room **If** you **do** this for me,	he **will get** an interview. **you'll have** a chance of promotion.
Note: The **negative** of **will** is **won't**. In spoken English **will** is usually shortened to **'ll**. You can change the order of conditional sentences: Tim **will get** an interview **if** he **works** in the stock room. or **If he works** in the stockroom, **he will get** an interview.	

The first conditional – Modal verbs will, may and might:

When we use **will** in the **result** clause of the first conditional, we are certain that something will happen. It is **definite**.

But we can use **may** or **might** instead of **will**. This means that the consequence is not certain. **It is possible, but not definite.**

I'm not feeling very well. If it rains tomorrow, I'll stay at home.
I'm feeling fine and I've got a car. If it rains tomorrow, **I might** stay at home, or **I may** go shopping. I'll decide tomorrow.

Note:
In the first conditional, there is **no difference in meaning** between **may** and **might**.

The first conditional – If and if not:

In conditional sentences, you don't always use **'if'** or **'if not'**. You can use **'provided that'** or **'so long as'** instead of **'if'**. For example:
If you put down the gun, I won't call the police. =
So long as put down the gun, I won't call the police. =
Provided that you put down the gun I won't call the police. = (**Provided that** is more formal than **if**)

You can use **'unless'** instead of **'if not'**. For example:
If you **don't** put the gun down, I'll call the police. =
Unless you put the gun down, I'll call the police.

Vocabulary:
to look smart or **to be well turned out**: to wear good clothes and to have tidy hair

a stockroom: the place where a shop keeps the products that are not on display

no guarantees: no definite promises, nothing is certain

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