

# 20 Things that might happen

There are many ways to talk about hypothetical future situations. You can use different structures to indicate whether you think a hypothesis is likely or unlikely.

⚙️ **New language** "What if," "suppose," "in case"

Aa **Vocabulary** Exams and assessment

🧩 **New skill** Talking about hypothetical situations

## 20.1 KEY LANGUAGE LIKELY TO HAPPEN

If a future outcome is likely to happen, you can use "what if," "suppose," and "in case" followed by the present tense to express it.

"What if" means "what would happen if a hypothetical situation occurred?"

Present tense shows the speaker believes this is likely to happen.

**What if I fail my exams?**  
**I won't be able to go to college.**



## 20.2 FURTHER EXAMPLES LIKELY TO HAPPEN

"Suppose" refers to the consequences of a hypothetical situation.

**Suppose they assess our coursework.**  
**We will have to keep a portfolio.**

**We should start organizing our project work in case they want to see it.**

"In case" refers to being prepared for the hypothetical situation.



## 20.3 MATCH THE SITUATIONS TO THE LIKELY CONSEQUENCES

What if we don't pass our exams?

① I'm going to take a water bottle

② Suppose you cannot afford to study.

③ I am studying really hard tonight

④ What if I forget to bring a calculator?

Maybe you could apply for funding.

in case the exam room is hot.

Maybe we'll have to take them again.

Maybe they will have spares.

in case we have a test tomorrow.



## 20.4 KEY LANGUAGE UNLIKELY TO HAPPEN

If a future outcome is possible, but unlikely to happen, you can also use "what if" and "suppose" followed by the past tense to express it. You can also use "just in case" with the present tense.

The past tense shows the speaker thinks this is unlikely to happen.

**Just imagine! What if we all passed our exams with perfect scores?**



## 20.5 FURTHER EXAMPLES UNLIKELY TO HAPPEN

"Suppose" and "supposing" are interchangeable in this context.

**Suppose I got caught cheating. My parents would be furious.**

**You should apply for a job just in case you fail your exams.**

"Just" is added to "in case" to talk about preparation for a situation that is less likely.

The verb remains in the present tense after "just in case."



## 20.6 MARK WHETHER THE OUTCOMES ARE LIKELY OR UNLIKELY

I've studied hard. I'm buying champagne in case I pass all my exams.

Likely ☒ Unlikely ☐

① What if she notices that I've copied the essay from the internet?

Likely ☐ Unlikely ☐

② Suppose I won the lottery. I could afford to study abroad.

Likely ☐ Unlikely ☐

③ Suppose I write three good essays. That will be enough.

Likely ☐ Unlikely ☐

④ What if I studied for 14 hours every day from now on?

Likely ☐ Unlikely ☐

⑤ Suppose the examiner asks my name in French. What should I say?

Likely ☐ Unlikely ☐

⑥ I'm taking 10 pencils to the exam just in case mine break.

Likely ☐ Unlikely ☐

⑦ It's supposed to stop raining, but I'll bring an umbrella in case it doesn't.

Likely ☐ Unlikely ☐

⑧ What if I misunderstood all the questions? That would be a disaster.

Likely ☐ Unlikely ☐



## 20.7 KEY LANGUAGE THE FIRST AND SECOND CONDITIONALS

### FIRST CONDITIONAL

You can use the first conditional to talk about realistic future results if a realistic condition is fulfilled.

"If" + present simple.  
**If you study** really hard this year,  
**you'll pass** your university exams.  
 "Will" + infinitive.

### SECOND CONDITIONAL

You can use the second conditional to predict future results if an unlikely condition is fulfilled.

"If" + past simple.  
**If you went** to fewer parties,  
**you would get** better results.  
 "Would" + infinitive.



## 20.8 READ THE TEXT AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

Students do not need to remember information for exams.

True ☐ False ☒

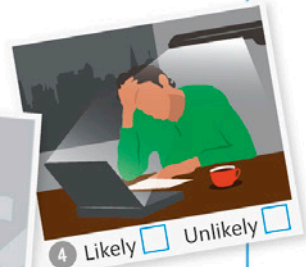
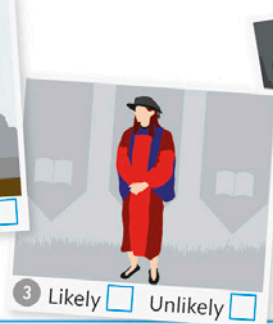
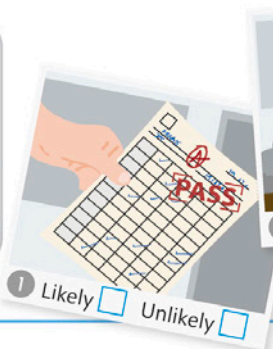
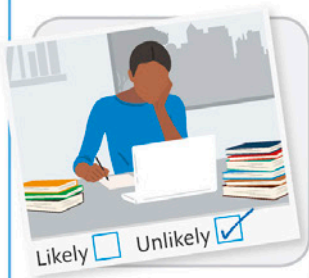
- 1 Students take three exams at the end of the year.  
True ☐ False ☐
- 2 The students currently have continuous assessment.  
True ☐ False ☐
- 3 The author thinks exams are a fair way to assess students.  
True ☐ False ☐
- 4 Students are told that they can encourage change.  
True ☐ False ☐

## Memorizing is not learning!

**W**hy are you trying to remember dozens of facts, figures, and quotations? The only reason is so that you can use them in the 12 terrifyingly stressful 3-hour exams that will be the only "proof" of how much you have learned over the academic year. Suppose it didn't have to be this way? What if you had continuous assessment throughout the year that showed what you can do with the knowledge, rather than how much you can cram into your memory? This can happen if you write to the head of your academic departments and urge them to consider 21st-century modes of assessment. Make time and write today.



## 20.9 LISTEN TO THE AUDIO AND MARK WHETHER EACH OUTCOME IS LIKELY OR UNLIKELY





## 20.10 RESPOND TO THE AUDIO, SPEAKING OUT LOUD

Suppose you could live anywhere. Where would you choose?

*I'd live in my hometown to be near my family.*



1 If you could meet any historical leader, who would it be?



2 Supposing you were ruler of the world, what would you do?



3 What will you do next if you pass the exam?



## 20 CHECKLIST



"What if," "suppose," "in case" ☐

Aa Exams and assessment ☐



Talking about hypothetical situations ☐



## REVIEW THE ENGLISH YOU HAVE LEARNED IN UNITS 17-20

NEW LANGUAGE	SAMPLE SENTENCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	UNIT
ORGANIZING DISCOURSE MARKERS	<b>First</b> , it is important to consider which courses you want to study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	17.1
MAKING GENERALIZATIONS	<b>In some cases</b> , students live off campus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	18.1
THE PASSIVE VOICE	The book <b>was studied</b> by many people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.1
NOUNS FORMED FROM PHRASAL VERBS	The teacher gave us a <b>handout</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.7
LIKELY AND UNLIKELY SITUATIONS	<b>What if I fail</b> my exams? <b>What if we all passed</b> with top grades?	<input type="checkbox"/>	20.1, 20.4