

Verbs and Conditions

In this packet, we look at verbs in the present, past and future. We then add the conditional into our repertoire, so we can add the word “if.”

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Exploring Scottish Gaelic Verb Tenses and Markers

Before we add the conditional to our repertoire, let's review what we know about the past, present, and future of regular Scottish Gaelic verbs.

Firemen, policemen, chefs, postmen, athletes, all wear uniforms to communicate information to us by sight. Athletes, for example wear colors and numbers which indicate what team they are on and what position they play. Similarly, verbs wear markers to tell us what tense they have and what role they're playing. The key is to learn what the markers are and what they are telling us.

Present Tense

The only verbs that can go directly into the Present Tense are the (irregular) verbs 'to be':

Form	Bi	Is	Role
Independent Form	Tha... .	Is e... . ('S e... .)	Positive Statement
Dependent Form (memory helper: the dependent form is dependent on having two parts or more to the verb.)	Chan eil... .	Chan e... .	Negative Statement
	A bheil... ?	An e... ?	Positive Question
	Nach eil... ?	Nach e... ?	Negative Question

Notice how each of the four forms of 'bi' are different? In this way, we know by looking at the verb whether it is positive, negative, a question, or a statement. ('Is' is not only irregular, but defective as well! That means it doesn't have all tenses. If that weren't enough, it frequently disappears and is represented only by the particles (Cha, An, and Nach) in the dependent forms. Some have called 'Is' a 'decaying' verb. Isn't that lovely. What's a particle? A particle is a word that contributes to the meaning of a verb but is not complete by itself. For example, 'cha[n]' contributes 'negativity' to a verb, but without 'eil' or some other verb part we don't have a complete meaning.

Present Tense - Other verbs:

Use the verb 'to be' with a verbal noun.

Eisimpleirean

1. **Tha** mi deiseil. / I am ready.
2. **Chan eil** mi deiseil. / I am not ready.
3. **A bheil** e deiseil a-nis? / Is he ready now?
4. **Nach eil** e deiseil fhathast? / Isn't he ready yet?

Remember that following 'airson' - 'because' the verb needs to be the dependent form, following 'gu/gum/gun' (positive form) or 'nach' (negative form).

5. Tha mi deiseil airson gu bheil mi toilichte. / I am ready because I am happy.
6. Tha mi deiseil airson nach eil mi a' cadal. / I am ready because I am not sleeping.

Past Tense

Start with the verbs 'to be' :

Bi	Is
Bha... .	B' e... . (Bu + e)
Cha robh... .	Cha b' e... .
An robh... ?	Am b' e... ?
Nach robh... ?	Nach b' e... ?

Notice that the same four forms of the verb exist in the past tense, telling us whether the verb is a statement, question, positive or negative. However, the spelling is different. This spelling change tells us what tense the verb has. Both 'Bi' and 'Is' are irregular verbs and so they communicate tense by spelling changes in the root form.

In regular verbs, the root (usually the imperative form) stays the same, and markers are added for tense. Consider the following regular verbs and notice the markers for tense which have been bolded for you.

Eisimpleirean

7. **Bha** mi sgìth an-dè. / I was tired yesterday.
8. **Cha robh** mi sgìth an-diugh. / I was not tired today.
9. **An robh** i sgìth a-raoir? / Was she tired last night?
10. **Nach robh** iad sgìth Diluain? / Weren't they tired Monday?
11. **Bha** mi sgìth airson gun robh mi ag obair. / I was tired because I was working.
12. **Bha** mi sgìth airson nach robh mi a' cadal. / I was tired because I was not sleeping.

Past Tense - Other verbs:

For most verbs, you lenite the imperative form, and insert the particle 'do' in the dependent forms. Note that this 'do' is not related to any other 'do's that you may know.

Obair!	Ruith!	Fosgail!	Pòg!
Dh'obair... .	Ruith... .	Dh'fhosgail... .	Phòg... .
Cha do dh'obair	Cha do ruith	Cha do dh'fhosgail	Cha do phòg
An do dh'obair ... ?	An do ruith ... ?	An do dh'fhosgail ... ?	An do phòg ... ?
Nach do dh'obair ... ?	Nach do ruith ... ?	Nach do dh'fhosgail ... ?	Nach do phòg ... ?

The bolded items are the markers for regular verbs in the past tense. Notice how they change based on initial letter and lenitability of the initial letter.

Eisimpleirean

13. **Phòg** an cat a' mhuc. / The cat kissed the pig.
14. **Cha do phòg** an cat a' mhuc. / The cat did not kiss the pig.
15. **An do phòg** an cat a' mhuc? / Did the cat kiss the pig?
16. **Nach do phòg** an cat a' mhuc? / Didn't the cat kiss the pig?
17. **Bha** an cat sgìth airson gun do phòg an cat a' mhuc. / The cat was tired because the cat kissed the pig.

18. **Cha robh** an cat sgìth airson nach do phòg an cat a' mhuc. / The cat was not tired because the cat did not kiss the pig.
19. **Dh'obair** an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar. / The beautiful girl worked beside the cold, wee brook.
20. **Cha do dh'obair** an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar. / The beautiful girl did not work beside the cold, wee brook.
21. An **do dh'obair** an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar? / Did the beautiful girl work beside the cold, wee brook?
22. Nach **do dh'obair** an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar? / Did the beautiful girl not work beside the cold, wee brook?
23. **Bha** an duine brònach airson gun do dh'obair an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar. / The man was sad because the beautiful girl worked beside the cold, wee, brook.
24. **Cha robh** an duine brònach airson nach do dh'obair an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar. / The man was not sad because the beautiful girl did not work beside the cold, wee, brook.
25. **Dh'fhosgail** an duine an doras. / The man closed the door.
26. **Cha do dh'fhosgail** an duine an doras. / The man did not close the door.
27. An **do dh'fhosgail** an duine an doras? / Did the man close the door?
28. Nach **do dh'fhosgail** an duine an doras? / Did the man not close the door?
29. **Bha** an cù toilichte airson gun do dh'fhosgail an duine an doras. / The dog was happy because the man closed the door.
30. **Bha** an cù crosta airson nach do dh'fhosgail an duine an doras. / The dog was cross because the man did not close the door.
31. Ruith an caora dhubh suas an cnoc. / The black sheep ran up the hill.
32. **Cha do** ruith an caora dhubh suas an cnoc. / The black sheep did not run up the hill.
33. An **do** ruith an caora dhubh suas an cnoc? / Did the black sheep run up the hill?
34. Nach **do** ruith an caora dhubh suas an cnoc? / Didn't the black sheep run up the hill?
35. **Bha** an croitear glè chrosta airson gun do ruith an caora dhubh suas an cnoc. / The crofter was very cross because the black sheep ran up the hill.
36. **Cha robh** an croitear glè thoilichte airson nach do ruith an caora dhubh suas an cnoc. / The crofter was not very happy because the black sheep did not run up the hill.

Future Tense

'Is' doesn't have any more tenses. So we'll start with the verb 'to be' - Bi:

Bi
Bithidh... . (also Bidh)
Cha bhi... .
Am bi... ?
Nach bi... ?

Eisimpleirean

37. Bithidh an latha math a-màireach. / The day will be good tomorrow.
38. Cha bhi an latha math a-màireach. / The day will not be good tomorrow.
39. Am bi an latha math a-màireach? / Will the day be good tomorrow?
40. Nach bi an latha math a-màireach? / Won't the day be good tomorrow?

41. Bithidh mi toilichte airson gum bi an latha math a-màireach. / I will be happy because the day will be good tomorrow.
42. Cha bhi mi toilichte airson nach bi an latha math a-màireach. / I will not be happy because the day will not be good tomorrow.

Future Tense - Other verbs:

For most verbs, you put the suffix “-idh” or “-aidh” on the end of the imperative form of the verb - **on the independent form only**. The dependent forms do not change in any way.

Which form of the suffix you use depends on the spelling rule (broad to broad, slender to slender) - which is determined by the last vowel in the imperative form.

Obair!	Ruith!	Fosgail!	Pòg!
Obair <u>i</u> dh... .	Ruith <u>i</u> dh... .	Fosgail <u>i</u> dh... .	Pòg <u>a</u> idh... .
Chan <u>o</u> bair... .	Cha ruith... .	Chan <u>h</u> osgail... .	<u>C</u> ha phòg... .
An obair... ?	An ruith... ?	<u>A</u> m fosgail... ?	<u>A</u> m pòg... ?
Nach obair... ?	Nach ruith... ?	Nach f(h)osgail... ?	Nach pòg... ?

A few things to notice:

- 1) The particle ‘cha’ likes to lenite what it can, regardless of tense. Therefore, lenition in the negative statement is not a marker for tense.
- 2) Remember that the particle ‘an’ changes to ‘am’ before m, b, f, p. This is not a marker of tense.
- 3) Lenited ‘f’ is silent, and therefore words that begin with lenited ‘f’ (frequently) sound as though they begin with a vowel. ‘Cha’ becomes ‘chan’ before vowels and is not a marker for tense. ‘Cha’ follows the ‘To Die for’ rule (‘t’ and ‘d’ frequently resist lenition).
- 4) Notice that the dependent forms in the future tense have no tense markers added to them. This absence of markers is itself a marker, because this is the only tense in which the dependent form has no changes to indicate tense.

Consider the verb ‘ruith!’

Ruith! (Past)	Ruith! (Future)
Ruith... .	Ruithidh... .
Cha do ruith... .	Cha ruith... .
An do ruith... ?	An ruith... ?
Nach do ruith... ?	Nach ruith... ?

Notice the bolded elements. The key to deciphering tense markers is that each form - question, statement, positive and negative - must be unique. ‘R’ is unlenitable (although pronunciation may change) and therefore it strips the markers down to the bare minimum. Despite this, we can see that each form is still unique. Now you can see why the ‘idh’/‘aidh’ ending is essential for the independent form, but not necessary for the dependent forms in the future tense.

Eisimpleirean

43. Pògaidh an cat a’ mhuc. / The cat will kiss the pig.
44. Cha phòg an cat a’ mhuc. / The cat will not kiss the pig.
45. An pòg an cat a’ mhuc? / Will the cat kiss the pig?
46. Nach pòg an cat a’ mhuc? / Won’t the cat kiss the pig?

47. Bithidh an cat sgìth airson gum pòg an cat a’ mhuc. / The cat will be tired because the cat will kiss the pig.
48. Cha bhi an cat sgìth airson nach pòg an cat a’ mhuc. / The cat will not be tired because the cat will not kiss the pig.

49. Obairidh an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar. / The beautiful girl will work beside the cold, wee brook.
50. Chan obair an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar. / The beautiful girl will not work beside the cold, wee brook.
51. An obair an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar? / Will the beautiful girl work beside the cold, wee brook?
52. Nach obair an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar? / Won’t the beautiful girl work beside the cold, wee brook?

53. Bithidh an duine brònach airson gun obair an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar. / The man will be sad because the beautiful girl will work beside the cold, wee brook.
54. Cha bhi an duine brònach airson nach obair an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar. m

55. Fosgailidh an duine an doras. / The man will open the door.
56. Chan fhosgail an duine an doras. / The man will not open the door.
57. Am fosgail an duine an doras? / Will the man open the door?
58. Nach fosgail an duine an doras? / Won't the man open the door?
59. Bithidh an cù toilichte airson gum fosgail an duine an doras. / The dog will be happy because the man will open the door.
60. Cha bhi an cù crosta airson nach f(h)osgail an duine an doras. (Sometimes verbs starting with 'f' lenite following 'nach' because it's easier to say.) / The dog will not be happy because the man will not open the door.
61. Ruithidh an caora dhubh suas an cnoc. / The black sheep will run up the hill.
62. Cha ruith an caora dhubh suas an cnoc. / The black sheep will not run up the hill.
63. An ruith an caora dhubh suas an cnoc? / Will the black sheep run up the hill?
64. Nach ruith an caora dhubh suas an cnoc? / Won't the black sheep run up the hill?
65. Bithidh an croitear glè crosta airson gun ruith an caora dhubh suas an cnoc. / The crofter will be very cross because the black sheep will run up the hill.
66. Cha bhi an croitear glè toilichte airson nach ruith an caora dhubh suas an cnoc. / The crofter will not be very cross because the black sheep will not run up the hill.

Relative Future

The relative future is used in certain circumstances in the future tense, especially following question words (not càite) and certain conjunctions.

Bi
...bhith e as... (also bhios)
No!
No!
No!

The relative future is formed by leniting the root/imperative form of the verb. (Notice that the irregular verb 'bi' uses 'bith' to form the future - it's added a silent 'th' in the middle, just for fun. Why not?!)

Eisimpleirean

67. Cuin a bhith~~e~~as i a' falbh? / When will she be leaving?
68. Bithidh i a' falbh aig trì uairean. / She will be leaving at three o'clock.

Notice that the response to a question which uses the relative future use the regular future.

Relative Future - Other Verbs

Obair!	Ruith!	Fosgail!	Pòg!
...dh'obair <u>eas</u>ruith <u>eas</u>dh'fhosgail <u>eas</u>phòg <u>as</u> ...
No! No! No!	No! No! No!	No! No! No!	No! No! No!

Notice that the relative future lenites the imperative like the past tense, and then adds a suffix (following the spelling rule, of course) like the future-independent. This time, however, the suffix is either '-eas' or '-as' depending on the final vowel. There are no dependent forms of the relative future. It is only used as a substitute for the independent form.

Eisimpleirean

69. Cuin a phògas an cat a' mhuc? / When will the cat kiss the pig?
70. Cuin a dh'obaireas an nighean bhòidheach? / When will the beautiful girl work?
71. Càite an obair an nighean bhòidheach? / Where will the beautiful girl work?
72. Cuin a dh'fhosgaileas an duine an doras? / When will the man open the door?
73. Cuin a ruitheas an caora dhubh suas an cnoc? / When will the black sheep run up the hill?

Past and Future Tense Exercises

Pay attention to the punctuation to know what form of the verb to use.

- 1) _____ (Coisich!, walked) mi dhan bhùth madainn an-dè.
- 2) _____ (Ith!, Did eat) thu cèic nuair a _____ (Bi!, were) thu aig a' bhùth?
- 3) _____ (Ith!, No (did not eat)). _____ (Òl, drank) mi fion.
- 4) _____ (Sgrìobh!, did write) thu litir ri do seanmhair an t-seachdain 'sa chaidh?
- 5) _____ (Sgrìobh!, no (did not write)), ach _____ (Freagair!, did not answer) i mi fhathast.

- 6) _____ (Seinn!, did not sing) mi aig a' chèilidh airson _____ (Snàmh!, swam) mi anns an loch!
- 7) _____ (Nigh!, Won't wash) thu an cù mòr?
- 8) _____ (Nigh!, will not wash) airson _____ (Bi!, will be) e anns a' phàirce!
- 9) _____ (Cluich!, will play) Calum ball-coise madainn Dimàirt agus _____ (Òl, will drink) e anns an fheasgar.
- 10) Carson a _____ (Bi!, will be) e _____ (Cluich!, playing) nuair a _____ (Bi!, will be) i _____ (Ith!, eating) reòiteagan?

Conditional Forms

We saw with the relative future a mixture of elements from the past and future and this will also be true in the conditional. This is all ok - remember the goal is to make sure that enough markers are present to make each form unique and communicate whether the verb is positive, negative, a statement or a question.

There is a tricky bit with the conditional, however. The conditional uses 'synthetic forms' when used with the first person pronouns (I and we). This means that the verb and the pronoun-subjects are mashed together into one word. This is a holdover from ages ago. Don't worry about it, just learn it.

Bi
Bhithinn Bhith <u>eadh</u> tu, e, i, sibh, iad, Bob, an cat Bhith <u>eamaid</u>
Cha bhithinn Cha bhith <u>eadh</u> tu, e, i, sibh, iad, Bob, an cat Cha bhith <u>eamaid</u>
Am bithinn Am bith <u>eadh</u> tu, e, i, sibh, iad, Bob, an cat Am bith <u>eamaid</u>
Nach bithinn Nach bith <u>eadh</u> tu, e, i, sibh, iad, Bob, an cat Nach bith <u>eamaid</u>

There are several things to notice here. First, notice that the independent form has a lenited root in addition to the suffixes. Notice that the ‘cha’ form is also lenited/ aspirated - but this is because ‘cha’ itself likes to lenite. Lenition with the ‘cha’ form is not a tense marker.

Second, notice that unlike the suffix added to the future tense, the suffixes with the conditional appear on all the forms.

Thirdly, “-inn” and “-eamaid” forms are the synthetic forms. These forms contain the subject of the sentence - the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘we’ respectively, therefore, **we never want to see ‘bhithinn mi’ or bhitheamaid sinn’!** The form with the “-eadh” is the suffix marker we will see most often.

Fourthly, the “-eadh” ending requires that the pronoun ‘thu’ become ‘tu.’ The relative future requires this too, just so you know.

OK, hold on to your hats.

Obair!	Ruith!	Fosgail!	Pòg!
Dh’obair <u>inn</u> Dh’obair <u>eadh</u> Dh’obair <u>eamaid</u>	Ruith <u>inn</u> Ruithe <u>adh</u> Ruithe <u>amaid</u>	Dh’fhosgail <u>inn</u> Dh’fhosgail <u>eadh</u> Dh’fhosgail <u>eamaid</u>	Phòg <u>ainn</u> Phòg <u>adh</u> Phòg <u>amaid</u>
Chan obair <u>inn</u> Chan obair <u>eadh</u> Chan obair <u>eamaid</u> An obair <u>inn</u> ... ? An obair <u>eadh</u> ... ? An obair <u>eamaid</u> ... ? Nach obair <u>inn</u> ... ? Nach obair <u>eadh</u> ... ? Nach obair <u>eamaid</u> ... ?	Cha ruith <u>inn</u> Cha ruith <u>eadh</u> Cha ruith <u>eamaid</u> An ruith <u>inn</u> ... ? An ruith <u>eadh</u> ... ? An ruith <u>eamaid</u> ... ? Nach ruith <u>inn</u> ... ? Nach ruith <u>eadh</u> ... ? Nach ruith <u>eamaid</u> ... ?	Chan fhosgail <u>inn</u> Chan fhosgail <u>eadh</u> Chan fhosgail <u>eamaid</u> Am fosgail <u>inn</u> ... ? Am fosgail <u>eadh</u> ... ? Am fosgail <u>eamaid</u> ... ? Nach fosgail <u>inn</u> ... ? Nach fosgail <u>eadh</u> ... ? Nach fosgail <u>eamaid</u> ... ?	Cha phòg <u>ainn</u> Cha phòg <u>adh</u> Cha phòg <u>amaid</u> Am pòg <u>ainn</u> ... ? Am pòg <u>adh</u> ... ? Am pòg <u>amaid</u> ... ? Nach pòg <u>ainn</u> ...? Nach pòg <u>adh</u> ... ? Nach pòg <u>amaid</u> ... ?

We must remember that our goal is to have markers that make each form unique. I think that we can all agree that the conditional certainly does that. So with the conditional notice the following:

The independent form of the conditional lenites, like the past tense, but we can't use the 'do' marker because we need each form to be unique. So we add a suffix.

The dependent form of the conditional behaves like the future tense. But since we need to be unique, we have to add the suffix.

The suffix obeys the spelling rule. (With pòg, 'cha' and 'h' are underlined to show the 'cha' is causing lenition/aspiration, while the 'ò' and the 'a' from the suffix are underlined to show that the spelling rule is being obeyed).

Eisimpleirean

- 74. Bhithinn sgìth.
- 75. Bhitheadh tu (e, i, sibh, iad, Bob, an cat) sgìth.
- 76. Bhitheamaid sgìth.

Cha lenites of it's own accord, not because of the verb mood. Normally, the dependent form is not lenited (see the 'An' and 'Nach' forms).

- 77. Cha bhithinn sgìth.
- 78. Cha bhitheadh tu (e, i, sibh, iad, Bob, an cat) sgìth. ('tu' is used instead of 'thu' after -eadh)
- 79. Cha bhitheamaid sgìth.

- 80. Am bithinn sgìth?
- 81. Am bitheadh tu (e, i, sibh, iad, Bob, an cat) sgìth?
- 82. Am bitheamaid sgìth?

- 83. Nach bithinn sgìth?
- 84. Nach bitheadh tu (e, i, sibh, iad, Bob, an cat) sgìth?
- 85. Nach bitheamaid sgìth?

- 86. Bithidh mi sgìth airson gum bitheadh e ag obair.

- 87. Phògadh an cat a' mhuc.
- 88. Cha phògainn a' mhuc.
- 89. Am pògamaid a' mhuc?
- 90. Nach pògadh an cat a' mhuc?

91. Bha an cat sgìth airson gum pògadh an cat a' mhuc.

92. Dh'obaireadh an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar.

93. Chan obairinn ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar.
94. An obaireamaid ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar?
95. Nach obaireadh an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar?
96. **Bha** an duine brònach airson gun obaireadh an nighean bhòidheach ri taobh an t-allt beag fuar.
97. **Dh'fhosgaileadh** an duine an doras.
98. Chan fhosgailinn an doras.
99. Am fosgaileamaid an doras?
100. Nach fosgaileadh an duine an doras?
101. **Bha** an cù toilichte airson gum fosgaileadh an duine an doras.
102. Ruitheadh an caora dhubh suas an cnoc.
103. Cha ruithinn suas an cnoc.
104. An ruitheamaid suas an cnoc?
105. Nach ruitheadh an caora dhubh suas an cnoc?
106. **Bha** an croitear glè chrosta airson gun ruitheadh an caora dhubh suas an cnoc.

Exercises with Conditional Forms

The Verbs

ith! / eat!	ag ithe / eating	
obair! / work!	ag obair / working	
ò! / drink!	ag òl / drinking	
èisd! / listen!	ag èisdeachd / listening	(+ ri)
ruith! / run	a' ruith / running	
leugh! / read!	a' leughadh / reading	
sgrìobh! / write!	a' sgrìobhadh / writing	
leum! / jump!	a' leum / jumping	
nigh! / wash!	a' nighe / washing	
danns! / dance!	a' dannsadh / dancing	
coisich! / walk!	a' coiseachd / walking	(+ le, comhla ri)
pòg! / kiss!	a' pògadh / kissing	
caidil! / sleep!	a' cadal / sleeping	
blas! / taste!	a' blasadh / tasting	
fàg! / leave!	a' fàgail / leaving	
fosgail! / open!	a' fosgladh / opening	
figh! / knit!	a' fighe / knitting	
feuch! / try!	a' feuchainn / trying	
feith! / wait!	a' feitheamh / waiting	

Examples of the Tenses, Past, Future, Conditional

Past Tense

Dhanns... .	Ruith	Dh'ith	Dh'fhàg
Cha do dhanns	Cha do ruith	Cha do dh'ith	Cha do dh'fhàg
An do dhanns ... ?	An do ruith ... ?	An do dh'ith ... ?	An do dh'fhàg ... ?
Nach do dhanns...?	Nach do ruith...?	Nach do dh'ith ... ?	Nach do dh'fhàg ... ?

... gun do dhanns... ... gun do ruith... ... gun do dh'ith... ... gun do dh'fhàg...
 ... nach do dhanns.. ... nach do ruith..... nach do dh'ith... ... nach do dh'fhàg...

Future Tense

Dannsaidh... .	Ruithidh... .	Ithidh... .	Fàgaidh... .
Cha danns... .	Cha ruith... .	Chan ith... .	Chan fhàg... .
An danns... ?	An ruith... ?	An ith... ?	Am fàg... ?
Nach danns... ?	Nach ruith... ?	Nach ith... ?	Nach f(h)àg... ?

Connecting clauses

... gun danns... ... gun ruith... ... gun ith... ... gun fàg...
 ... nach danns... ... nach ruith... ... nach ith... ... nach f(h)àg...

Relative Future

dhannsas	ruitheas	dh'itheas	dh'fhàgas
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Conditional

Dhannsainn... .	Ruithinn... .	Dh'ithinn	Dh'fhàgainn... .
Dhannsadh... .	Ruitheadh... .	Dh'itheadh... .	Dh'fhàgadh... .
Dhannsamaid... .	Ruitheamaid... .	Dh'itheamaid... .	Dh'fhàgamaid... .
Cha dannsainn... .	Cha ruithinn... .	Chan ithinn... .	Chan fhàgainn... .
Cha dannsadh... .	Cha ruitheadh... .	Chan itheadh... .	Chan fhàgadh... .
Cha dannsamaid... .	Cha ruitheamaid	Chan itheamaid....	Chan fhàgamaid... .
An dannsainn... ?	An ruithinn... ?	An ithinn... ?	Am fàgainn... ?
An dannsadh... ?	An ruitheadh... ?	An itheadh... ?	Am fàgadh... ?
An dannsamaid... ?	An ruitheamaid... ?	An itheamaid... ?	Am fàgamaid... ?

... gun dannsainn... ... gun ruithinn... ... gun ithinn... ... gum fàgainn...
 ... gun dannsadh... ... gun ruitheadh..... gun itheadh... ... gum fàgadh...
 ... gun dannsamaid. ... gun ruitheamaid.. gun itheamaid... ... gum fàgamaid...
 ... nach dannsainn.. ... nach ruithinn..... nach ithinn... ... nach fhàgainn...
 ... nach dannsadh... ... nach ruitheadh.... nach itheadh... ... nach fhàgadh...
 ... nach dannsamaid... nach ruitheamaid... nach itheamaid..... nach fhàgamaid...

Exercises

Answer the following questions in the past tense using full sentences. Then rewrite the questions and answers in the future and conditional.

1) Cuin a dh'ith an duine curran?

2) A bheil am pathadh air Seonag airson nach do dh'òl i uisge?

3) An do dhanns i comhla ris a' chaora?

4) An do ruith an cù dhachaidh?

5) Nach do choisich am balach dhan sgoil?

6) An do choisich am balach dhan sgoil airson nach do ghabh e am bus?

7) An do phòg a' mhathair a nighean?

8) Carson a chaidil a' phiseag air an t-sofa?

9) An do sgrìobh e leabhar airson gun robh e ag iarraidh leabhar a leughadh?

10) Nach do bhlas esan sgonna le uachdar agus an do dh'ith ise reòiteag seoclaid?

11) An do dh'òl Fearchar sùgh orains?

12) An do nigh thu an car?

“If”

Gaelic has three words for “if” - “ma” / “mas”, “nan” / “nam,” or “mur.” There are times when a word for “if” is absent altogether!

“If” is frequently used in sentences with multiple clauses. The clause with the word “if” in it is called the subordinate clause. The rest of the sentence forms the main clause. In most circumstances the order in which the clauses come is not important.

I. Ma - stating a fact. “Ma” uses the independent or relative form of the verb. For example, “**ma tha**,” “**ma bha**,” or “**ma bhitheas**.” **Note:** The tense of the verb in the subordinate clause is usually the same as the tense of the verb in the main clause. If the sentence contains “and”, then “ma” must be repeated for each verb. When used with the verb “to be - ‘is’,” “ma” becomes “mas” in the present tense, but is separate in the past tense (“ma bu”).

Examples (note clause order)

Ma tha mi... If I am...

Ma bha mi... If I was...

Ma bhitheas mi... If I will be...

1) Tha mise a’ dol gu Glaschu **ma** tha Anna a’ tighinn. (*present tense*)

2) **Ma** dh’fhàg thu e aig an taigh, càite a bheil e? (*past tense*)

3) Chì mi thu an-diugh **ma** bhitheas* tu aig a’ bhùth. (*future tense*)

* Sometimes bhios is used instead of bhitheas.

4) **Ma** tha thu sgìth, dèan suidhe.

5) **Ma** dh’fhosgla mi an doras **agus** **ma** dh’èigheas mi air an caora againn, thèid mi gus an t-ospadal.

6) **Mas** breug bhuam e, is breug chugam e.

II. Nan/Nam - Supposing or theorizing. “Nan” or “nam” uses the dependent form of the verb. For example, “nan robh,” “nam bi,” “nam bitheadh.” “Nan/Nam” is **ONLY** used with the conditional or past habitual. Don’t use “Nan/Nam” if there isn’t a verb in the conditional in the sentence! Since in this case, the verb in the main clause is in the conditional, the verb in the “if” clause must also be in the conditional. This is unlike English, in which the subordinate clause is usually in the past tense. Note: this “nan/nam” is **NOT**, I repeat, **NOT** the same as the nan/nam possessive pronoun (nam, nad, na, na, nar, nur, nan/nam)! Remember, the final “n” in “nan” becomes an “m” before b, p, f, and m.

Examples

Nam bitheadh e... if he would be...

7) **Nan** robh mi sgìth, shuidhinn.

8) **Nam** bithinn **nam** thaigh fhèin, chaidlinn.

9) Cha ghlasadh iad an doras **nam** bitheadh* fios aca. *Sometimes biodh is used for bitheadh.

10) Thogainn an iuchair **nam** fàgadh tu i ann.

11) **Nam** bithinn aig an taigh, bhithinn a’ coimhead telebhisean an-dràsda.

12) **Nam** bitheadh an t-acras ort, dh’fhaodamaid stad airson biadh an àiteigin.

13) **Nam** bithinn nad àite, bhithinn a’ smaoinichadh air obair eile.

III. **Mura** - If + negative. “Mura” uses the dependent form of the verb. For example, “mur eil,” “mur robh,” “mura bi,” or “mura bitheadh.” “Mura” becomes “mur an” before verbs which have “do” in their past tense forms. Also, the final “a” in “mura” is frequently dropped if the following word begins with a vowel, although you will also see “mura h-”. “Mura” negates both “ma” and “nan/nam.”

Examples

Mur eil mi... If I am not... (also mura h-eil, mur nach eil can be seen)

Mur robh mi... If I was not...

Mura bi mi... If I will not be...

Mur bitheadh e... If he would not be...

14) Inns dhomh **mur eil** thu a’ tighinn.

15) Cha seinneadh lain **mura** seinneadh tusa.

16) Leughainn am pàipear **mura** binn sgìth.

17) Chan fhaic mi thu **mura** bi thu ann.

18) **Mur eil** thu sgìth, gabh òran.

19) Dèan an obair agad a Sheumais **mur** do rinn thu i fhathast.

20) Tha Domhnall ann an taigh Anna **mur** do dh’fhalbh e.

Na Freagairtean

Past and future tense exercises

- 1) Choisich mi dhan bhùth madainn an-dè. / I walked to the shop yesterday morning.
- 2) An do ith thu cèic nuair a bha thu aig a' bhùth? / Did you eat cake when you were at the shop?
- 3) Cha do dh'ith. Dh'òl mi fion. / No. I drank wine.
- 4) An do sgrìobh thu litir ri do seanmhair an t-seachdain 'sa chaidh? / Did you write a letter to your grandmother last week?
- 5) Sgrìobh, ach cha do dh'fhreagair i mi. / Yes, but she didn't answer me.
- 6) Cha do seinn mi aig a' chèilidh airson gun do snàmh mi anns an loch! / I didn't sing at the ceilidh because I swam in the loch!
- 7) Nach nigh thu an cù mòr? / Won't you wash the big dog?
- 8) Cha nigh airson gum bì e anns a' phàirce! / No because he will be at the park!
- 9) Cluichidh Calum ball-coise madainn Dimàirt agus òlaidh e anns an fheasgar. / Calum will play football Tuesday morning and he will drink in the afternoon.
- 10) Carson a bhitheas e a' cluich nuair a bhitheas i ag ithe reòiteagan? / Why will he be playing when she will be eating ice cream?

If

- 1) Tha mise a' dol gu Glaschu ma tha Anna a' tighinn.
I am going to Glasgow if Ann is coming.
- 2) Ma dh'fhàg thu e aig an taigh, càite a bheil e?
If you left it at home, where is it?
- 3) Chì mi thu an-diugh ma bhitheas* tu aig a' bhùth.
I will see you today if you are (will be) at the shop.
- 4) Ma tha thu sgìth, dèan suidhe.
If (factually) you are tired, sit down.

5) Ma dh'fhosglas mi an doras agus ma dh'èigheas mi air an caora againn, thèid mi gus an t-ospadal.

If I open the door and (if I) shout for our sheep, I will be going to the hospital.

6) Mas breug bhuam e, is breug chugam e.

If it is a lie from me, it is a lie to me (proverb for 'I am only repeating what I was told)

7) Nan robh mi sgìth, shuidhinn.

If (supposing) I were tired, I would sit down.

8) Nam bithinn nam thaigh fhèin, chaidlinn.

If I were in my own house, I would sleep.

9) Cha ghlasadh iad an doras nam bitheadh* fios aca.

They wouldn't lock the door if they knew.

10) Thogainn an iuchair nam fàgadh tu i ann.

I would pick up the key if you left it there.

11) Nam bithinn aig an taigh, bhithinn a' coimhead telebhisean an-dràsda.

If I were at home, I'd be watching television just now.

12) Nam bitheadh an t-acras ort, dh'fhaodamaid stad airson biadh an àiteigin.

If you were hungry, we could stop for a meal somewhere.

13) Nam bithinn nad àite, bhithinn a' smaoineachadh air obair eile.

If I were in your place, I'd be thinking of another job.

14) Inns dhomh mur eil thu a' tighinn.

Tell me if you aren't coming.

15) Cha seinneadh lain mura seinneadh tusa.

John wouldn't sing if you didn't.

16) Leughainn am pàipear mura binn sgìth.

I would read the paper if I wasn't tired.

17) Chan fhaic mi thu mura bi thu ann.

I will not see you if you aren't there.

18) Mur eil thu sgìth, gabh òran.

If you aren't tired, let's have a song.

19) Dèan an obair agad a Sheumais mur do rinn thu i fhathast.

Do your work James if you haven't done it yet.

20) Tha Domhnall ann an taigh Anna mur do dh'fhalbh e.
Donald is in Ann's house if he hasn't left.

Sources and Further Reading

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Nòtaichean dhomhsa

ACA-04-01 (Conditional of Bi (not first person forms), if)

ACA-04-02 (Conditional of Bi, first person forms)

ACA-04-03 (Conditional of regular verbs)