

Conditional Translation Problems A2, A3, A4: Discussion

A2. We can go to Champaign if the weather is nice.

Discussion: as usual, we begin the translation by picking out the form phrases in the sentence. Here there is only one logical form phrase: the word “if”. So the words that remain will make up the subject matter sentences, which are each assigned a sentence letter via a translation table.

The subject matter sentences here are “We can go to Champaign,” and “the weather is nice.”

We can go to Champaign if the weather is nice.

We build a translation table, assigning a sentence letter to each of these subject matter sentences.

P: We can go to Champaign

Q: The weather is nice

Putting in sentence letters for the subject matter sentences, only the form phrase “if” remains.

P: We can go to Champaign

Q: The weather is nice

We can go to Champaign if the weather is nice.

P if Q.


We know that “if” is a conditional phrase, translated by the arrow. But in order to translate the conditional correctly, we need to put the antecedent before the arrow, and the consequent after the arrow.

The conditional phrase tells us which part is the antecedent. (*Remember: the antecedent isn't guaranteed to come first in English!*) The word “if” is an ordinary conditional phrase (not an “only” phrase – since it doesn’t contain the word “only”). And we know that **ordinary conditional phrases come right before the antecedent**.

P: We can go to Champaign

Q: The weather is nice

We can go to Champaign **if** the weather is nice.

P **if** Q.


Since “if” comes right before “Q,” “Q” must be the antecedent. So “Q” goes before the arrow.

$(Q \rightarrow)$

And that means the other part of the conditional, “P,” has no choice but to be the consequent.

$(Q \rightarrow P)$

This completes our translation.

(*Note that here the original English conditional was **inverted** – with the consequent coming first, and the antecedent after.*)

A3. You’ll get an “A” in Logic, provided that you pass the final exam.

Discussion: We begin by picking out the form phrases of the sentence. Here the only form phrase is the conditional phrase “provided that”.

What remains are the subject matter sentences “You’ll get an ‘A’ in Logic” and “You pass the final exam.” We build a translation tables assigning each a sentence letter.

P: You'll get an 'A' in Logic

Q: You pass the final exam.

Replacing subject matter sentences with sentence letters, we get the following.

P: You'll get an 'A' in Logic

Q: You pass the final exam.

You'll get an "A" in Logic, **provided that** you pass the final exam.

P provided that Q

Once again, "provided that" is an ordinary conditional phrase (since it doesn't contain the word "only"); and ordinary conditional phrases come right before the antecedent. So "Q" must be the antecedent, and must go before the arrow.

P provided that Q

$(Q \rightarrow)$

And so "P" must be the consequent, going after the arrow.

$(Q \rightarrow P)$

This completes the translation.

*(Note that here again, the original English conditional was **inverted** – with the consequent coming first, and the antecedent after.)*

A4. Assuming that God exists, the meek will inherit the earth.

Discussion: The only form phrase here is the conditional phrase “assuming that”.

What remains are the subject matter sentences “God exists” and “The meek will inherit the earth.” We build a translation tables assigning each a sentence letter.

P: God exists

Q: The meek will inherit the earth

Replacing subject matter sentences with sentence letters, we get the following.

P: God exists

Q: The meek will inherit the earth

Assuming that God exists, the meek will inherit the earth.

Assuming that P, Q

“Assuming that” is an ordinary conditional phrase (since it doesn’t contain the word “only”), and so comes right before the antecedent. So “P” is the antecedent, going before the arrow.

P provided that Q

$(P \rightarrow)$

“Q” must be the consequent, going after the arrow.

$(P \rightarrow Q)$

This completes the translation.

(Here the original English conditional was standard – with the antecedent first, consequent after.)