

Conditionals

Simple/Neutral Conditionals

ἦν μὲν γὰρ ἐθέλωμεν ἀποθνήσκειν ὑπὲρ τῶν δικαίων, οὐ μόνον εὐδοκιμήσομεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον χρόνον ἀσφαλῶς ἡμῖν ἐξέσται ζῆν· εἰ δὲ φοβησόμεθα τοὺς κινδύνους, εἰς πολλὰς παραχὰς καταστήσομεν ἡμᾶς αὐτούς. [Isocrates 6.107]

"For if we are willing to die for our just rights, not only shall we gain renown, but in time to come we shall be able to live securely; but if we show that we are afraid of danger, we shall plunge ourselves into endless confusion."

τοῦτο μὲν δὴ, εἰ νικήσεις, τί σφέας ἀπαιρήσεται, τοῖσί γε μὴ ἔστι μηδέν; τοῦτο δέ, ἦν νικηθῆς, μάθε ὅσα ἀγαθὰ ἀποβαλέεις· [Herodotus 1.71.3]

"Now if you conquer them, of what will you deprive them, since they have nothing? But if on the other hand you are conquered, then look how many good things you will lose"

εἰ ταῦτα λέξεις, ἐχθαρεῖ μὲν ἐξ ἐμοῦ, [Soph. An. 93]
"If that's what you are going to say, I will hate you"

(By not committing to the plausibility of the condition, the speaker leaves such assessment to his audience. This can be diplomatic and polite (Isocrates, Herodotus), or in-your-face (Sophocles))

Contrary-to-fact conditions

(examples of why the distinction between past and present contrary-to fact is false)

Thucydides on Agamemnon: [imperfect for past]
οὐκ ἂν οὖν νήσων ἔξω τῶν περιοικίδων (αὐτὰι δὲ οὐκ ἂν πολλὰ εἶεν) ἠπειρώτης ὦν ἐκράτει, εἰ μὴ τι καὶ ναυτικὸν εἶχεν. [Thuc. 1.9.4]
He could not have held sway beyond the adjacent islands, had he not had a naval force.

Socrates: Ask Gorgias what he is :: How do you mean? [aorist for present]
ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ ἐτύγχανεν ὦν ὑποδημάτων δημιουργός, ἀπεκρίνατο ἂν δήπου σοι ὅτι σκυτοτόμος. [Plato Grg. 447d3-4]
Just as, if he were a shoemaker, he would surely reply to you "shoemaker".

Haimon to Creon: [aorist for present]
εἰ μὴ πατήρ ἦσθ', εἶπον ἂν σ' οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖν. [Soph. An. 757]
"If you weren't my father, I'd say you're out of your mind"

A not-so-vivid handout on conditionals:

[we should just dump this FMV, FLV business. Ah well..]

Contrary-to-fact:	εἰ plus indicative II	indicative II + ἂν	
Neutral:	εἰ plus indicative	indicative	
Possible:	εἰ plus opt.	optative + ἂν	[aka FLV]
Plausible:	ἐάν plus subj. future indicative		[aka FMV]
Present general:	ἐάν plus subj. present indicative		
Past general:	εἰ plus opt.	imperfect	