

Lesson 14

Predicting Outcomes

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Objective:

To develop your ability to describe likely consequences and next steps using clear, natural language for making workplace predictions.

Predicting Outcomes

When teams work under pressure, even small delays or changes can influence the next steps of a project. In many organisations, people must communicate not only what has happened, but also what is likely to happen next. Being able to describe expected outcomes helps colleagues plan, adjust priorities, and respond quickly to new information.



Discuss

1. In your role, what situations require you to explain what will probably happen next?
2. What kinds of delays or changes usually influence the rest of your work?
3. When you hear someone describe a possible outcome, what information helps you understand the situation clearly?

Why Deadlines Matter

You will watch a short, authentic discussion about deadlines and how people react when work is delivered late.

Before Viewing

Before watching, consider:

What impressions do people form when someone regularly submits work late?
Do you think quality or timing matters more in your organisation? Why?

While Viewing

Watch the video and answer the questions.

According to the discussion, how is late work usually judged?
What did the study reveal about how managers and HR view late submissions?
Does submitting work early improve how it is judged?
What explanation do the speakers give for why people underestimate how long tasks take?

After Viewing – Discuss

Watch the video and answer the questions.

Which reactions from the video match your own experience at work?
Do you agree that late work is often viewed as lower quality? Why or why not?
What kinds of future problems can appear if deadlines are missed repeatedly?

Language Focus – Describing Likely Outcomes

Professionals often explain consequences using short “if–then” statements. These help colleagues understand what typically happens or what will probably happen next.

There are two common patterns:

1. Describing what normally happens

Use this pattern to describe routines, rules, or typical results.

If + present tense → present tense

Examples:

- If a report is late, people usually judge it more strictly.
- If a team finishes early, the next phase starts sooner.
- If deadlines are unclear, tasks often take longer.
- This pattern describes **general behaviour**, not one single case.

Language Focus – Describing Likely Outcomes

Professionals often explain consequences using short “if–then” statements. These help colleagues understand what typically happens or what will probably happen next.

There are two common patterns:

2. Describing what will happen next

Use this pattern to predict an outcome based on current information.

If + present tense → will + base verb

Examples:

- If we receive the data today, we will finalise the update.
- If the delay continues, the release will need to be adjusted.
- If the team gets more support, they will finish on time.
- This pattern helps you communicate **expected future consequences**.

Language Focus – Describing Likely Outcomes

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There are two common patterns:

Checking the difference

General truth (always or usually happens):

- If work arrives late, managers judge it more harshly.

Prediction (specific situation now):

- If this report arrives late again, the client will raise a concern.

A. What Usually Happens?

For each situation, describe the typical outcome using the first pattern (If + present → present).

- A team receives unclear requirements.
- Someone submits a task without checking the details.
- A department gets more requests than expected.
- A colleague works under strong time pressure.

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There are two common patterns:

A. What Usually Happens?

For each situation, describe the typical outcome using the first pattern (If + present → present).

- A team receives unclear requirements.
- Someone submits a task without checking the details.
- A department gets more requests than expected.
- A colleague works under strong time pressure.

B. What Will Happen Next?

Use the second pattern (If + present → will + verb) to predict a likely consequence in the specific situation.

- The design team is still waiting for feedback from another department.
- The budget review is delayed by two days.
- One team member is ill, and the workload is increasing.
- The client asks for a change very close to the deadline.

Language Focus – Describing Likely Outcomes

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There are two common patterns:

C. Mini-Scenarios – Give a Short Update

In pairs, choose one scenario and give a 20–30 second spoken update predicting next steps.

Scenario 1 – Slow Data

- The data team hasn’t delivered the figures yet, and the report is due tomorrow.

Scenario 2 – Extra Capacity

- One team has finished early and is available to support other tasks.

Scenario 3 – Repeated Delays

- A supplier has missed several deadlines this month.

Your update should describe:

The current situation

What will probably happen next

anything that might change the timeline

Forecasting for Stakeholders

You are preparing a short verbal update for a group of stakeholders who want to understand how recent changes may affect the next steps of a project.

Choose one of the situations below.

Give a clear 45–60 second spoken update that includes:

- what has happened so far
- what usually happens in this type of situation (general rule)
- what will probably happen next (specific prediction)
- one recommended action or adjustment

Forecasting for Stakeholders

You are preparing a short verbal update for a group of stakeholders who want to understand how recent changes may affect the next steps of a project.

Situation A – Team Capacity Change

Two team members are starting annual leave earlier than expected. Several tasks are still in progress.

Situation B – Late Information

Key data from another department arrived later than planned. The team still needs to check accuracy before using it.

Situation C – Increased Customer Requests

There has been a sudden rise in customer queries, and the support team is reaching its limit.

You may use expressions such as:

If this continues, we will...

If this happens again, the team will...

If we receive X on time, we can...

If a process isn't clear, it usually...

Focus on producing a brief, realistic forecast that sounds appropriate for a meeting or a project update.



Points to remember

Use short “if–then” statements to explain consequences clearly.

They help colleagues understand what normally happens and what will probably happen next.

Use the **zero conditional** to describe general rules or typical outcomes.

For example: If a task is unclear, it usually takes longer.

Use the **first conditional** to predict future results based on current information.

For example: If we receive the figures today, we will finalise the report.