

In case

A

Study this example situation:



Jeff is a soccer referee. He always wears two watches during a game because it is possible that one watch will stop.

He wears two watches **in case** one of them stops.
In case one of them stops = because it is possible one of them will stop.

Some more examples of **in case**:

- Ann might call tonight. I don't want to go out **in case** she calls. (= because it is possible she will call)
- I'll draw a map for you **in case** you can't find our house. (= because it is possible you won't be able to find it)

We use **just in case** for a smaller possibility:

- I don't think it will rain, but I'll take an umbrella **just in case**. (= **just in case** it rains)

Do not use **will** after **in case**. Use the present tense with a future meaning (see also Unit 24):

- I don't want to go out tonight **in case** Ann calls. (*not* **in case** Ann will call)

B

In case is not the same as **if**. We use **in case** to say *why* somebody does (or doesn't do) something. You do something now **in case** something happens later. Compare:

in case

- We'll buy some more food **in case** Tom comes. (= Perhaps Tom will come; we'll buy some more food now, whether he comes or not; then we'll *already* have the food *if* he comes.)
- I'll give you my phone number **in case** you need to contact me.

if

- We'll buy some more food **if** Tom comes. (= Perhaps Tom will come; if he comes, we'll buy some more food; if he doesn't come, we won't buy any more food.)
- You can call me at the hotel **if** you need to contact me.

C

You can use **in case** (+ *past*) to say why somebody did something:

- We bought some more food **in case** Tom came. (= because it was possible that Tom would come)
- I drew a map for Sarah **in case** she couldn't find the house.
- We rang the bell again **in case** they hadn't heard it the first time.

D

In case of . . . is not the same as **in case**. **In case of . . .** = if there is . . . (especially on signs, etc.):

- **In case of** fire, please leave the building as quickly as possible. (= if there is a fire)
- **In case of** emergency, telephone this number. (= if there is an emergency)

Exercises

110.1 Barbara is going for a long walk in the country. She is going to take these things with her:
some chocolate a map an umbrella her camera some water a towel
She has decided to take these things because:

maybe she'll want to go for a swim	it's possible she'll get lost	she might get hungry
she might want to take some pictures	perhaps she'll get thirsty	maybe it will rain

Write sentences with *in case* saying why Barbara has decided to take these things with her.

1. *She's going to take some chocolate in case she gets hungry.*
2. She's going to take a map in case _____.
3. She's going to _____.
4. _____.
5. _____.
6. _____.

110.2 What do you say in these situations? Use *in case*.

1. It's possible that Mary will need to contact you, so you give her your phone number.
You say: Here's my phone number _____.
2. A friend of yours is going away for a long time. Maybe you won't see her again before she goes, so you decide to say good-bye now.
You say: I'll say _____.
3. You are shopping in a supermarket with a friend. You think you have everything you need, but perhaps you've forgotten something. Your friend has the list. You ask him to check it.
You say: Can you _____?

110.3 Write sentences with *in case*.

1. There was a possibility that Ann would call. So I didn't go out.
I didn't go out in case Ann called.
2. I thought my parents might be worried about me. So I called them.
I called _____.
3. I wrote a letter to Jane, but I didn't get a reply. So I wrote to her again because I thought that perhaps she hadn't gotten my first letter.
I _____.
4. I met some people when I was on vacation in France. They said they might come to New York one day. I live in New York, so I gave them my address.
I _____.

110.4 Put in *in case* or *if*.

1. Ann might call this evening. I don't want to go out *in case* _____ she calls.
2. You should tell the police *if* _____ your bicycle is stolen.
3. I hope you'll come to Chicago sometime. _____ you come, you can stay with us.
4. This letter is for Susan. Can you give it to her _____ you see her?
5. Write your name and address on your bag _____ you lose it.
6. Go to the Lost and Found office _____ you lose your bag.
7. The burglar alarm will ring _____ somebody tries to break into the house.
8. I've just painted the door. I'll put a WET PAINT sign next to it _____ somebody doesn't realize the paint is still wet.
9. I was advised to get insurance _____ I needed medical treatment while I was abroad.