

A Study this example situation:



Your car should have a spare wheel **in case** you have a puncture.
(= because it is possible you will have a puncture)

in case something happens =
because it is possible it will happen

Some more examples of **in case**:

- ☐ I'd better write down my password **in case I forget it**.
(= because it is possible I will forget it)
- ☐ Shall I draw a map for you **in case you have a problem** finding our house?
(= because it is possible you will have problems finding it)
- ☐ I'll remind them about the meeting **in case they've forgotten**.
(= because it is possible they have forgotten)

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)

We do not use **will** after **in case** (see also Unit 25):

- ☐ I'll write down my password **in case I forget it**. (*not in case I will forget*)

B **In case** and **if** are not the same. 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.
(= Maybe 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.
- ☐ You should insure your bike **in case** it is stolen.

if

- ☐ We'll buy some more food **if** Tom comes.
(= Maybe 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 on this number **if** you need to contact me.
- ☐ You should inform the police **if** your bike is stolen.

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

- ☐ I gave him my phone number **in case he needed** to contact me.
(= because it was possible that he would need to contact me)
- ☐ I drew a map for Sarah **in case she had** a problem finding our house.
- ☐ We rang the doorbell again **in case they hadn't heard** it the first time.

D **in case of** = if there is ... (especially on notices, instructions etc.):

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

Exercises

114.1 Sophie is going for a long walk in the country. You're worried about her because:

perhaps she'll be thirsty
it's possible she'll get lost

she might need to call somebody
perhaps she'll get hungry

maybe she'll get lonely
maybe it will rain

You advise her to take some things with her. Complete the sentences using **in case**.

- 1 Take a map in case you get lost
- 2 You should take some chocolate
- 3 You'll need an anorak
- 4 Take plenty of water
- 5 Don't forget your phone
- 6 Shall I come with you?

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

- 1 It's possible that Jane will need to contact you, so you give her your phone number.
You say: I'll give you my phone number in case you need to contact me
- 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 goodbye now.
You say: I'll say goodbye now
- 3 You are buying food in a supermarket with a friend. You think you have everything you need, but maybe you've forgotten something. Your friend has the list. You ask her to check it.
You say: Can you?
- 4 You're shopping with a friend. She's just bought some jeans, but she didn't try them on. Maybe they won't fit her, so you advise her to keep the receipt.
You say: Keep

114.3 Complete the sentences using **in case**.

- 1 It was possible that it would rain, so I took an umbrella.
I took an umbrella in case it rained
- 2 I thought that I might forget the name of the book. So I wrote it down.
I wrote down the name of the book
- 3 I thought my parents might be worried about me. So I phoned them.
I phoned my parents
- 4 I sent an email to Lisa, but she didn't reply. So I sent another email because maybe she didn't get the first one.
I sent her another email
- 5 I met some people when I was on holiday in France. They said they might come to London one day. I live in London, so I gave them my phone number.
I gave them my phone number

114.4 Put in **in case** or **if**.

- 1 I'll draw a map for you in case you have a problem finding our house.
- 2 You should tell the police if you have any information about the crime.
- 3 I hope you'll come to Australia sometime. you come, you must visit us.
- 4 I made a copy of the document something happens to the original.
- 5 This book belongs to Kate. Can you give it to her you see her?
- 6 Write your name and phone number on your bag you lose it.
- 7 Go to the lost property office you lose your bag.
- 8 The burglar alarm will ring somebody tries to break into the house.
- 9 You should lock your bike to something somebody tries to steal it.
- 10 I was advised to get insurance I needed medical treatment while I was abroad.