Zero Conditionals

What are type zero conditionals?

Type zero conditionals refer to actions or conditions which are always true, or almost always true, in the past and in the present. For example:

If you heat water to 100 degrees Celsius, it boils.
When I drink too much wine, I get a headache.

Each sentence describes a fact which always happens.

What is the sentence structure?

The sentence always contains a condition and a result. Think of the condition as the action/event needed to produce the result. In the above examples:

If you heat water to 100 degrees Celsius (condition), it boils (result).
When I drink too much wine (condition), I get a headache (result).

Type zero conditionals use the following form:

if/when **|** condition (subject + simple present verb), **|** result (subject + simple present verb)
result (subject + simple present verb) **|** if/when **|** condition (subject + simple present verb)
If I have a job interview, I press my suit and shine my shoes.
I press my suit and shine my shoes if I have a job interview.

Notice that there is a comma when the condition comes first.

How are type zero conditionals used?

Type zero conditionals express factual actions/events, such as scientific facts and general truths. (Water always boils at 100 degrees, for example.) However, type zero conditionals may also describe habitual, almost always true actions. For example:

If it rains, I bring an umbrella.
When it snows a lot, I don't go to school.
If it's a day off, I sleep late.

When describing a habitual action, something could change the situation and make the statement untrue. (I might forget to bring an umbrella, for example.) But each sentence expresses the idea that the resulting actions happen nearly all the time.

Is there additional information on adverbs?

- A good method to identify type zero conditionals is to ask, "Is this statement true in the past and in the present?" If the answer is yes to both, then it's likely a type zero conditional.
- In almost all cases, the conditional clause may use either *if* or *when* with little change in meaning. *Whenever* may also be used.