

Grammar

2a the future

We can use different ways to express the future in English. The choice depends on the situation. Here are the main forms and their uses (see also 6b):

form	meaning / use	example
Future Simple with will + base form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decisions made at the moment of speaking • predictions, often with <i>I believe, expect, hope, think, etc.</i> • offers or willingness 	<p>OK, I'll see you this evening at eight. X All right. I'm going to see you at eight. ✓ All right, I'll see you at eight. I think it will be a difficult game.</p>
be going to + base form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requests • firm intentions, promises • threats • facts about the future • intentions, plans • something in the future is because of something in the present • predictions, especially when there is evidence 	<p>I'll give you a lift if you like. All right. I'll water the plants. Will you do me a favour? I'll love you forever. I won't speak to you ever again! Christmas day will fall on Tuesday this year. I'm going to phone him tomorrow. X Look. It will rain. ✓ Look. It's going to rain. That building is going to collapse soon.</p>
shall + base form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suggestions • offers (with <i>I</i> or <i>we</i>) • asking for advice 	<p>Shall we go for a walk? Shall I help you with those bags? What shall I say if she calls? We'll be waiting outside the station.</p>
Future Continuous will be + -ing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities planned to a future time 	<p>I'll be going by bus as usual.</p>
Present Continuous be + -ing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrangements, often with <i>tonight, at eight, this weekend, etc.</i> 	<p>I'm having my hair cut today.</p>
be + to -infinitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • official arrangements, especially when announced 	<p>The President is to visit Brussels next week.</p>
Present Simple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • firm plans or timetables, especially after <i>when, as soon as, until, etc.</i> 	<p>The boat leaves the island on Friday. I'll phone you when I arrive.</p>
would + base form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reporting predictions in the past, often with <i>I believed, hoped, etc.</i> 	<p>I thought it would be a difficult game.</p>

Practice

1 Match the first sentence (1–14) with the second sentence (a–n) to make short exchanges.

Example: $O + o$

- | | |
|---|--|
| 0 'Look at all those dark clouds.' | a 'Shall I have a word with her?' |
| 1 'Mum, I've dropped my glass of milk.' | b 'I'll be with you in just a minute.' |
| 2 'The meeting will be held on Tuesday at 3pm.' | c 'That's easy. I'm going to get a job that earns me lots of money.' |
| 3 'What time did she say she's going to get here?' | d 'Thanks. That will be very helpful.' |
| 4 'I told her to tidy her room but she won't.' | e 'Actually she's going to have a baby.' |
| 5 'How much longer are you going to be?' | f 'Never mind. Accidents will happen.' |
| 6 'I feel awful. I think I'm going to faint.' | g 'I'm not sure I'll be able to come.' |
| 7 'I'll come and help you clear the attic in a moment.' | h 'She'll probably be here by 9.30.' |
| 8 'Tessa seems to have gained a lot of weight.' | i 'I'll call the doctor right away.' |
| 9 'Shall we go now? I've had enough.' | j 'Let's just have fish and chips.' |
| 10 'Will you please shut the door?' | k 'Perhaps I'll see you tomorrow.' |
| 11 'What shall I get for dinner?' | l 'No, I won't. Do it yourself!' |
| 12 'When am I going to see you again?' | m 'Are you? I'll come with you.' |
| 13 'What do you think you'll do when you finish?' | n 'OK. I'll just get your coat.' |
| 14 'I'm just going to go to the post office.' | o 'Yes, there's going to be a storm.' |

2 Complete the conversation using *will/won't, shall/shan't, going to/not going to* and the verbs given at the end of the lines. The first is given as an example.

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------|
| ROSA | Hi, what <i>are</i> you <i>doing</i> this evening?
..... I (1) round? | do |
| MARIA | Not this evening. I (2) busy till late. | come |
| ROSA | When do you think it (3) convenient for me to pop round? | be |
| MARIA | Well, we (4) the dates?
Have you got your diary handy? Now, let's see. Today is Tuesday the 20th
so tomorrow (5) Wednesday 21st. I (6) so busy
tomorrow – what about you? Do you think you (7) free? | be
be
check |
| ROSA | I (8) my dentist tomorrow. Is Thursday OK? | be |
| MARIA | Yeah. I think that (9) fine. | be |
| ROSA | OK. What time I (10) round? | see |
| MARIA | I (11) the house at all on Thursday so I don't think
it (12) a problem, whatever time you come. | be
leave
be |
| ROSA | That's fine. | |
| MARIA | And you (13) the manuscript with you? | bring |
| ROSA | Don't worry. I (14) it. | forget |
| MARIA | OK. I (15) you Thursday then. Cheers. | see |

Things will get worse before they get better. (ENGLISH SAYING)
Things will get worse before they get worse. (PESSIMIST)

2b

be going to, Present Continuous, Present Simple

Present Continuous or be going to?

We often use the Present Continuous to talk about the near future rather than the distant future:

I'm taking the kids to the cinema this evening.

I'm getting up at 6.30 tomorrow.

- We can use *be going to* or the Present Continuous for more distant events:
We're going to sail / 're sailing round the world next year.
- To talk about plans, we can use the Present Continuous or *be going to* in the same future situations, sometimes with a slight change of emphasis (To ask about plans or arrangements we use the Future Continuous. See 2c):
I'm going to see my psychiatrist tomorrow. (= I intend to see my psychiatrist tomorrow)
I'm seeing my psychiatrist tomorrow. (= I have already arranged to see my psychiatrist tomorrow)
- If there is no plan or arrangement, we can only use *be going to*. This use is prediction, especially when there is evidence. The Present Continuous is not possible:
Those dark clouds mean we are going to have a storm.
~~*X You're getting a headache if you don't turn the volume down.*~~
✓ You're going to get a headache if you don't turn the volume down.

Present Continuous or Present Simple?

In future use, the Present Simple always suggests a fixed timetable. The Present Continuous can suggest the possibility of change:

~~*X The sun is rising at six tomorrow.*~~

✓ The sun rises at six tomorrow.

I'm seeing him at six o'clock. (= my plan)

I see him at six o'clock. (= my fixed schedule)

- We often use the Present Continuous for personal arrangements, and the Present Simple for when an official or a committee makes the arrangements:
I'm seeing Mikis at the weekend. (= my arrangement)
I leave for London tomorrow. (= my boss says so)

be going to or will?

We use *be going to* to talk about something we know will happen because of information in the present (see also 3b):

The sky's grey – I think it's going to rain.

It's eight o'clock – you're going to be late again.

- We use *will* to talk about something we believe will happen:
Don't carry that heavy box – you will hurt your back.
- We also use *will* to indicate a sudden decision:
Leave the washing up – I'll do it later.
- We can use *going to* if we decided earlier:
I told you that I'm going to wash up.



Practice

1 Complete these sentences using *be going to*, *will*, the Present Continuous or the Present Simple. Use the verbs in brackets.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Look, that car over there (crash)! | 6 Nina often (visit) her parents. |
| 2 I can't come tonight because I
(stay in) to watch TV. | 7 I (be) rich one day! |
| 3 The Prime Minister (travel) to
Brussels tomorrow. | 8 According to my diary, we (meet)
at 3pm tomorrow. |
| 4 The match (start) at 3pm as always. | 9 We (win) the European Cup
next year. |
| 5 Don't worry about the car; I
(phone) for a taxi. | 10 The National Theatre (celebrate)
its thirtieth anniversary soon. |

2 Put the verb in brackets into the most suitable form of the future.

- 'What you this evening?' (**do**) 'Nothing'.
'Well, we to that new pizzeria?' (**go**)
- In 2004 the Olympic Games in Athens. (**take place**)
- Which showing do you want to go to? The film at nine and eleven. (**start**)
- I work at five – so shall we meet at a quarter past? (**finish**)
- Seven o'clock isn't possible as I something else then. (**do**)
- This lesson is boring. When it to ? (**finish**)

3 Underline the most suitable form of the future in the following text.

AQUARIUS

All Aquarians this month (1) *get off / are getting off* to a good start with some good news on the home front. The news (2) *is helping / will help* to relax recent tensions and give you the chance to make a fresh start. There (3) *shall / will be* lots of new things on other fronts this month. It really (4) *is going to be / is being* a time of great opportunity. A special person (5) *shall come / is coming* into your life soon – and you mustn't think this (6) *is going to be / is being* just another friendship. At work, you (7) *are needing / will need* to rise to new challenges that (8) *are testing / will test* your character to the utmost. If you (9) *make / are making* a wrong move, you (10) *will probably regret / probably regret* it. In short, this is a month which (11) *will bring / shall bring* many opportunities but there (12) *will be / are being* risks, too, so be careful!

WOMAN: *I'm getting married on Saturday and we're having a traditional wedding.*

MAN: *Are you having a white wedding?*

WOMAN: *Yes, and I'm going to wear my grandmother's dress.*

MAN: *And what's your grandmother going to wear?*

2c

Future Continuous and Future Perfect

Future Continuous

The Future Continuous (*will be -ing*) can refer to temporary activities during a future period:



This time next week, she'll be flying to New York.
(= she has planned to fly to New York then)

- The Future Continuous often refers to a routine or to things which will happen in the normal course of events. It emphasises that no new arrangement is necessary:
I can give you a lift to the station. It's no trouble for me – I'll be going that way anyway.
- We use the Future Continuous to ask about someone's plan or arrangement:
Will you be using the library this afternoon?
When will the President be arriving because I must organise the reception?

Future Continuous or Future Simple?

We use the Future Simple (*will + infinitive without to*) to indicate a personal decision at the moment of speaking:

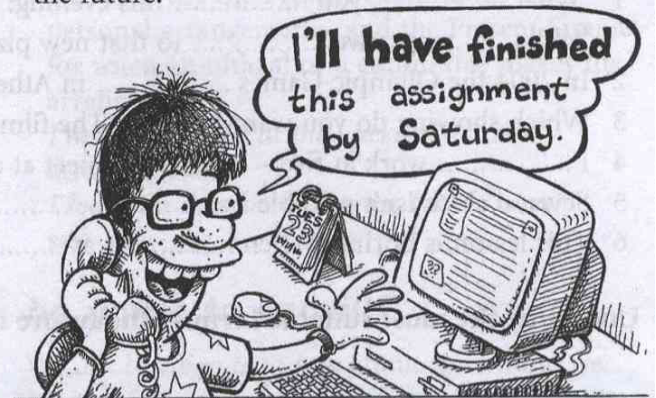
OK, I'll see you this evening.

- In the Future Continuous, the activity has already been decided:
 - ✗ *This time tomorrow I will lie on the beach.*
 - ✓ *This time tomorrow I'll be lying on the beach.*
We'll be staying here until next weekend.
I'll be driving to Madrid next week so I can give you a lift if you like.

- The Future Simple in questions can sound less polite than the Future Continuous. Compare:
Will you drive me to the airport?
Will you be driving me to the airport? (= more polite)

Future Perfect

We use the Future Perfect (*will have -ed*) to talk about something that will finish at a time in the future.



I'll have finished this assignment by Saturday.

Today is Tuesday. Rosie says she will have finished her assignments by Saturday. (= Rosie will finish at any time up to Saturday, but not later)

- ✗ *When I finish this book it means I will read all of her books.*
- ✓ *When I finish this book it means I will have read all of her books.*

Practice

1 Complete these pairs of sentences using the Future Simple, the Future Continuous or the Future Perfect. Use the verb given in brackets.

- 1 a part in our play? You're a really good actor, we need you! (**take**)
 b I know you're a keen member of the drama group. I suppose you part in the play this year. (**take**)
- 2 a I in London next year, still doing the same old job. (**be**)
 b I in London for ten years by next June. (**be**)
- 3 a By Friday, I this new book by Marquez. (**finish**)
 b If I don't have too much work this year, I think I all of Marquez's novels. (**finish**)
- 4 a This time tomorrow, Maria on a beach in Majorca. (**sunbathe**)
 b I expect she until she gets badly burnt – that's what she did last year. (**sunbathe**)
- 5 a Don't make too much noise after midnight – I soundly, I hope. (**sleep**)
 b Wake me up by nine o'clock – I long enough by then. (**sleep**)
- 6 a We to Australia later this summer. It's a long flight. (**fly**)
 b It's strange that when we get to Sydney, we half way round the world. (**fly**)
- 7 a Look, I can give you a lift to the station – I that way anyway. (**drive**)
 b You'll be late for your train – I you to the station if you like. (**drive**)

2 Fill in the spaces using the Future Simple, the Future Continuous or the Future Perfect of the verb in brackets. The first (0) is given as an example.

- ROSA When shall I come round (0 *come round*)? Is Thursday still OK?
- MARIA Well, don't come at six – I (1 *work*) then.
- ROSA What time do you think you (2 *be*) free?
- MARIA Let's see, I (3 *work*) on the manuscript all day as I told you, and I expect I (4 *complete*) the second chapter by about seven. OK?
- ROSA Yes, because I (5 *be*) quite busy at about six tomorrow as well. I've got an appointment with my dentist and I don't think she (6 *finish*) much before seven.
- MARIA Well, we really must be getting on with the book, you know – by the end of this month we (7 *work on*) the project for a whole year. It's taking far too long.
- ROSA Yes, I (8 *jump*) for joy when it's finished.
- MARIA Me too. By the way, (9 *go*) near the post office?
- ROSA Probably. It's not far from the dentist.
- MARIA You see, I've been expecting an important parcel and I think it (10 *arrive*) by Thursday. If you (11 *go*) past there anyway, could you collect it for me?
- ROSA No problem. So, I (12 *see*) you later. Bye for now.