

# When I do / When I've done      When and if

Study these examples:

A: What time will you phone me tomorrow?  
 B: I'll phone you **when I get** home from work.

'I'll phone you when I get home from work' is a sentence with two parts:  
*the main part:* 'I'll phone you'  
*and the when-part:* 'when I get home from work (tomorrow)'  
 The time in the sentence is future ('tomorrow') but we use a *present* tense (get) in the when-part of the sentence.

We do *not* use will in the when-part of the sentence:

- We'll go out **when it stops** raining. (*not* 'when it will stop')
- **When you are** in London again, you must come and see us. (*not* 'when you will be')
- (*said to a child*) What do you want to be **when you grow up**? (*not* 'will grow')

The same thing happens after: **while**    **before**    **after**    **as soon as**    **until or till**

- I'm going to read a lot of books **while** I'm on holiday. (*not* 'while I will be')
- I'm going back home on Sunday. **Before** I go, I'd like to visit the museum.
- Wait here **until (or till)** I come back.

You can also use the *present perfect* (have done) after **when / after / until / as soon as**:

- Can I borrow that book **when you've finished** it?
- Don't say anything **while Ian is here**. Wait **until he has gone**.

It is often possible to use the present simple or the present perfect:

- I'll come **as soon as I finish**.                      *or*                      I'll come **as soon as I've finished**.
- You'll feel better **after you have**                      *or*                      You'll feel better **after you've had** something to eat.

But do not use the present perfect if two things *happen together*. The present perfect shows that one thing will be complete *before* the other (so the two things do *not* happen together). Compare:

- **When I've phoned** Kate, we can have dinner.  
 (= First I'll phone Kate and after that we can have dinner.)
- but* • **When I phone** Kate this evening, I'll invite her to the party. (*not* 'when I've phoned')  
 (In this example, the two things happen together.)

After **if**, we normally use the present simple (if I do / if I see etc.) for the future:

- It's raining hard. We'll get wet **if we go out**. (*not* 'if we will go')
- Hurry up! **If we don't hurry**, we'll be late.

Compare **when** and **if**:

We use **when** for things which are *sure* to happen:

- I'm going shopping this afternoon. (for sure) **When I go shopping**, I'll buy some food.

We use **if** (*not* 'when') for things that will *possibly* happen:

- I might go shopping this afternoon. (it's possible) **If I go shopping**, I'll buy some food.
- **If it is raining** this evening, I won't go out. (*not* 'when it is raining')
- Don't worry **if I'm late** tonight. (*not* 'when I'm late')
- **If they don't come** soon, I'm not going to wait. (*not* 'when they don't come')

## EXERCISES

25.1 Complete these sentences using the verbs in brackets. All the sentences are about the future. Use will/won't or the present simple (I see / he plays / it is etc.).

- 1 I'll **phone** (phòne) you when I **get** (get) home from work.
- 2 I want to see Margaret before she ..... (go) out.
- 3 We're going on holiday tomorrow. I ..... (tell) you all about it when we ..... (come) back.
- 4 Brian looks very different now. When you ..... (see) him again, you ..... (not/recognise) him.
- 5 We must do something soon before it ..... (be) too late.
- 6 I don't want to go without you. I ..... (wait) until you ..... (be) ready.
- 7 Sue has applied for the job but she isn't very well qualified for it. I ..... (be) surprised if she ..... (get) it.
- 8 I'd like to play tennis tomorrow if the weather ..... (be) nice.
- 9 I'm going out now. If anybody ..... (phone) while I ..... (be) out, can you take a message?

25.2 Make one sentence from two.

- 1 You will be in London again. You must come and see us then.  
    **You must come and see us** when **you are in London again**.
- 2 I'll find somewhere to live. Then I'll give you my address.  
    I ..... when .....
- 3 I'll do the shopping. Then I'll come straight back home.  
    ..... after .....
- 4 It's going to start raining. Let's go home before that.  
    ..... before .....
- 5 She must apologise to me first. I won't speak to her until then.  
    ..... until .....

25.3 Read the situations and complete the sentences.

- 1 A friend of yours is going to visit London. You want to know where she is going to stay.  
    You ask: Where are you going to stay when **you are in London**?
- 2 A friend of yours is visiting you. She has to go soon but maybe there's time for a cup of tea.  
    You ask: Would you like a cup of tea before .....
- 3 Your friend is reading the newspaper. You'd like it after her.  
    You ask: Can I have the newspaper when .....
- 4 You want to sell your car. Jim is interested in buying it but he hasn't decided yet.  
    You ask: Can you let me know as soon as .....
- 5 There are serious traffic problems in your town but they are building a new road.  
    You say: I think it will be better when .....

25.4 Put in **when** or **if**.

- 1 Don't worry **if** I'm late tonight.
- 2 Tom might phone while I'm out this evening. .... he does, can you take a message?
- 3 I'm going to Rome next week. .... I'm there, I hope to visit a friend of mine.
- 4 I think Jill will get the job. I'll be very surprised ..... she doesn't get it.
- 5 I'm going shopping. .... you want anything, I can get it for you.
- 6 I'm going away for a few days. I'll phone you ..... I get back.
- 7 I want you to come to the party but ..... you don't want to come, that's all right.
- 8 We can eat at home or, ..... you prefer, we can go to a restaurant.