

# Expressing future

There are several ways of talking about future time in English.  
This is a summary of the most common forms and their uses.

Future - will	Future - going to	Present Simple	Present Continuous
action in the future that cannot be influenced	decision/plan made for the future	action set by a time table or schedule	action already arranged for the near future
assumption/prediction with regard to the future	conclusion/prediction with regard to the future		
spontaneous/instant decision			

The most usual way of talking about the future in English is „will“ („shall“ is occasionally used with *I* and *we* in very formal British English).

## Form of will Future

	positive	negative	question
no differences	I will speak.	I will not speak.	Will I speak?

## Use

### 1 spontaneous/instant decisions

*Don't worry! I'll do it for you.*

*Wait, we'll help you.*

### 2 predictions/conclusions based on your opinion (often used “think, hope, be sure”)

*Maybe your computer will send you a message.*

*I hope she will write soon.*

### 3 promise

*I promise I won't watch TV tonight.*

### 4 an action in the future that cannot be influenced

*The holidays will start soon.*

*It will snow tomorrow.*

**!!! “Will” is often used with the adverbs *certainly, definitely, probably, possibly.***

*I'll definitely go to the party. Sam probably won't go.*

## Form of *be going to* Future

	positive	negative	question
<b>I</b>	I am going to speak.	I am not going to speak.	Am I going to speak?
<b>you / we / they</b>	You are going to speak.	You are not going to speak.	Are you going to speak?
<b>he / she / it</b>	He is going to speak.	He is not going to speak.	Is he going to speak?

## Use

### 1 plans and intentions

*She's going to be an architect.*

*I'm going to study harder next year.*

### 2 predictions/conclusions based on present evidence

*The sky is very dark, it's going to rain.*

*She's got the best score. She's going to win.*

### Will and be going to

Both are used for predictions about the future, with slightly different meaning.

*They're going to crash.* (Something I can see now tells me this.)

*I think they'll crash.* (This is my opinion)

## Present simple for future use

The present simple is used for future events which are parts of a timetable or schedule.

*On Thursday we have Geography.*

*On 2<sup>nd</sup> September he leaves Japan.*

## Present continuous for future use

The present continuous is used for plans/actions in the future, especially when they are already arranged.

*Where are you going in September?*

*We're travelling from Thailand to the Philippines.*

## Practice

### 1. Underline the best form.

- 1) Have you seen Ann? She is *going to* / *will* have a baby.
- 2) Perhaps I *will see* / *am seeing* you again one day.
- 3) A: 'There's someone at the door.' B: 'I *go* / *I'll go*'.
- 4) I promise I *tell* / *I'll tell* you tomorrow.
- 5) I *will see/ am seeing* the doctor tomorrow at 10.30.
- 6) Look – Joe *is going to* / *will show* us something interesting.
- 7) A: 'I don't want to drive.' B: 'OK. I'm *going to/ I'll* drive.'
- 8) A: 'Shall we go out?' B: 'No, *I'll / I'm going to* wash my clothes.'

### 2. What would you say in these situations? Use the correct form of the future.

- 1) You intend to go to Australia for your holiday next year.

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- 2) You have already arranged to meet your sister this evening.

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- 3) At this time tomorrow you expect to be in the process of walking to school.

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- 4) The weather has become very cold and the sky has turned black. This means snow very soon.

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- 5) You've looked at the train timetable for the weekend. It says the departure time of your train is 7.15 in the morning.

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- 6) After your exams have finished your plan is to travel round the world on a motorbike.

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- 7) There is a strong possibility of a rise in the price of food next year. This is your prediction.

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- 8) Your plane is scheduled to land at 11.15 at night.

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### 3. Match the pairs

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|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1 We're going to Korea next month.               | a I think it's going to be hot.                 |
| 2 It's a beautiful morning, with no clouds.      | b It'll probably be hot.                        |
| 3 She's always late.                             | a She probably won't be here on time today.     |
| 4 She phoned to say her bus didn't come.         | b She isn't going to be here on time.           |
| 5 Our football team is really good.              | a I'm sure we'll win today's match.             |
| 6 It's 6: 1, with only 10 minutes to play.       | b We're going to win the match.                 |
| 7 I've seen this film before. I know the ending. | a Maybe she'll marry the doctor.                |
| 8 It's a great film. How will it end?            | b She's going to marry the doctor.              |
| 9 How many children are you going to have?       | a I don't know. Ask me again in 10 year's time. |
| 10 How many children will you have?              | b Two. Next month.                              |

### 4. Fill the gaps with the verbs in brackets using either the present simple or present continuous.

- 1) The train \_\_\_\_\_ at 9 at night. (arrive)
- 2) Giovanni \_\_\_\_\_ to spend the weekend with us. (come)
- 3) What time \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ to the doctor's on Wednesday? (go)
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_ the concert \_\_\_\_\_ at 7 or 8? (begin)
- 5) We \_\_\_\_\_ a dinner party on Friday and you're invited. (have)
- 6) Where \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ in Bangkok? (stay)
- 7) Our flight \_\_\_\_\_ in London at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. (land)
- 8) Everything's arranged. We \_\_\_\_\_ house this Saturday. (move)
- 9) I'm sorry, I can't meet up this weekend. I \_\_\_\_\_ to Wales. (go)
- 10) Our ferry \_\_\_\_\_ for Ibiza at 6 tomorrow morning. (depart)

### Practise on websites

<http://www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar/future-mix/exercises>

<http://www.autoenglish.org/tenses.htm>