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GRAMMAR

Future 1

We can refer to the future in English by using *will*, *be going to* or by using present tenses. Sometimes there is little difference between *will* and *be going to*, but at other times we use them in different ways.

Will

- **Form**

Form *will* future using *will* + infinitive without *to*. The negative of *will* is *won't*. The short form of *will* in speech and informal writing is 'll.

*What do you think **will** happen? I'll tell you later.*

*There **won't** be any lessons tomorrow.*

In formal English we also use *shall* with *I* and *we* to refer to the future. This is becoming rare.

- **Meaning**

Use *will* to talk generally about future beliefs, opinions, hopes and predictions. There is usually a time expression. Add *perhaps*, *probably* or *definitely* to show how certain or uncertain we are about our predictions.

*In the next century, most people **will probably** live in big cities.*

*Perhaps **it'll** rain tomorrow.*

*United **will definitely** win tonight.*

Probably and definitely come after will but before won't.

*She'll **probably** come with us tonight.*

*She **probably won't** come with us tonight.*

Be going to

- **Form**

Form *be going to* future with the verb *be* + *going* + the infinitive.

*Jean **is going to** learn to drive.*

*Tim and Ann **are going to** travel abroad next year.*

- **Meaning**

1 Use *be going to* for plans and intentions. The plan may be in the near future, or more distant.

*I'm **going to** do lots of work this evening.*

*After I finish university I'm **going to** travel all over Europe by InterRail.*

2 Use *be going to* for prediction when we can see in the present situation that something is going to happen.

*Look out! You're **going to** drop the plates!*

Present continuous

● Form

See Grammar 2 for the form of the present continuous.

I'm meeting my mother for lunch at one.

● Meaning

Use the present continuous future to talk about things we have arranged to do, such as social arrangements and appointments. There is usually a time expression.

A: **Are you doing** anything on Friday evening?

B: Not really. Why?

A: **I'm having** a party. Would you like to come?

State verbs (e.g. *be, know*) are not usually used in a continuous form (see Grammar 2), so we use *will* or *going to* with these verbs.

I'll be back on Friday.

I'm going to be back on Friday.

Will or going to?

We can make predictions with *will* and *going to*, and on most occasions either is possible.

I think it's going to/it'll probably rain tomorrow.

If there is strong evidence in the present situation, then we generally use *going to*:

I think it's going to rain this afternoon. (looking up at black clouds in the sky)

Going to or present continuous?

We use *going to* and the present continuous for plans and arrangements, and either is usually possible.

I'm going to have/I'm having a party on Friday.

Going to suggests that the details are not yet finalized – it's still just a plan.

Jean is going to have another driving lesson soon. (a plan, with no specific time)

The present continuous suggests that the arrangement is more fixed, with a time and a place.

Jean is having her driving lesson this afternoon. (it's fixed, in her diary)

Other meanings of will and shall

Will and *shall* have other meanings. See Grammar 9 and Grammar 22.

Is that the phone ringing? I'll answer it. (a spontaneous decision)

I'll do the best that I can to help you. (a promise)

Shall I help you? (offer/suggestion)

INTERMEDIATE LANGUAGE PRACTICE

1 Underline the correct sentence, a) or b), in each mini-dialogue.

1 A: Can you come dancing tomorrow night?

B: a) Sorry, I'll play basketball.

b) Sorry, I'm playing basketball.

2 A: What are your plans for the summer?

B: a) I'll spend a month in the mountains.

b) I'm going to spend a month in the mountains.

3 A: What do you think about the weather?

B: a) It'll probably rain tomorrow.

b) It's raining tomorrow.

4 A: What about tomorrow at about 5.30?

B: a) OK, I'll see you then.

b) OK, I'm seeing you then.

5 A: Mary is getting a dog in July for her birthday present.

B: a) Really? What is she calling it?

b) Really? What is she going to call it?

6 A: It would be nice to see you next week.

B: a) Are you doing anything on Wednesday?

b) Will you do anything on Wednesday?

2 Put each verb in brackets into a form of *will*, *going to* or present continuous. More than one answer may be possible.

1 Have you heard the news? Harry (join) is joining/is going to join the Army!

2 Sorry to keep you waiting. I (not be) long.

3 According to the weather forecast, it (snow)

4 I'm sorry I can't meet you tonight. I (go out) with my parents.

5 Careful! You (knock) that jug off the table!

6 In 50 years' time, most people (probably ride)

7 Our teacher (give) us a test tomorrow.

8 I (go) to Manchester at the end of next week.

9 Look out! You (hit) that tree!

10 I think our team (probably win)

3 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence.

- 1 My party is on Thursday.
I *...m having a party...* on Thursday.
- 2 Tomorrow's weather forecast is for rain.
It's tomorrow.
- 3 I predict a victory for our team.
I think win.
- 4 Tomorrow I'll be absent, Mrs Jones.
I here tomorrow, Mrs Jones.
- 5 Terry intends to finish painting the kitchen this evening.
Terry painting the kitchen this evening.
- 6 Meet me outside the station at 5.30.
I outside the station at 5.30.
- 7 What's our arrangement for lunch?
Where for lunch?
- 8 Everyone expects lots of tourism in this country next summer.
Everyone thinks a large number of tourists this country next summer.

4 Rewrite the sentences which are incorrect. If the sentence is correct, put a tick (✓).

- 1 I go swimming next Saturday. Would you like to come?
...I'm going swimming next Saturday. Would you like to come?.....
- 2 What are you going to discuss at the next meeting?
.....
- 3 The boat is turning over! I think it will sink!
.....
- 4 Sue is going to lend me her skates.
.....
- 5 The weather forecast says it's definitely sunny tomorrow.
.....
- 6 There is a lot to do. Is anyone going to help you?
.....
- 7 Sorry, I'm not seeing you tomorrow. I have to go to London.
.....
- 8 Bye for now. I see you later this evening.
.....

INTERMEDIATE LANGUAGE PRACTICE

5 Rewrite each sentence so that it contains *will* or *going to*.

- 1 I plan to study engineering in France.
..... *I'm going to study engineering in France.*
- 2 I've arranged a party for next Friday.
.....
- 3 We've got an appointment at the doctor's, so we can't come.
.....
- 4 Kelly is likely to get the job.
.....
- 5 Martin's wife is pregnant again.
.....
- 6 Sarah is usually late and I expect her to be late tonight.
.....
- 7 I predict a score of 3-0.
.....
- 8 There's a possibility of snow tomorrow.
.....

6 Put one suitable word in each space.

- 1 I've got a test tomorrow, so I'm *getting* up early to do some revision.
- 2 That suitcase looks heavy. I carry it for you?
- 3 Sorry, but I be here tomorrow. I have to go to the doctor's.
- 4 Which team do you think win the match?
- 5 Bye for now. I'll see you next week, but I'm not sure.
- 6 We're skating this afternoon. Do you want to come?
- 7 The weather isn't very good, so there be many people at the beach today.
- 8 Where do you want me to put these books? *I leave them here?*

→ SEE ALSO

Grammar 2: Present time 1

Grammar 9: Future 2

Present simple

- We often use the present simple to talk about events in the future which are part of a timetable, programme or calendar.

*Jim's plane **leaves** at 12.00.*

*Our head teacher **retires** next year.*

- **Time clauses**

In some *will* sentences there is a time clause, with a time word followed by the present simple. These time words are always followed by the present simple to talk about the future: *when, after, before, unless, in case, as soon as, until, by the time, the next time.*

***When I see** her again, I'll tell her your news.*

*Let's run home **before it rains.***

*Take an umbrella, **in case it rains.***

***As soon as we're ready,** we'll phone you.*

*Please wait here **until Mrs Hall comes back.***

INTERMEDIATE LANGUAGE PRACTICE

We can also use the present perfect with these words to emphasize that an action is complete.

Functions using *will* and *shall*

When we say that a verb form has a 'function', we mean that we use it for a purpose like 'promising' or 'suggesting' rather than to refer to time. Many uses of *will* and *shall* are more easily described in this way.

- **Promise**

I'll try as hard as I can.

- **Refusal**

I won't tell you!

- **Threat**

Stop doing that, or I'll tell my dad.

- **Decision made at the moment of speaking.**

A: 'Which one do you want?'

B: *I'll take the blue silk one.* (in a shop)

- **Offer**

I'll give you a lift in my car.

Will you have some more coffee?

Shall I open the door for you?

- **Request**

Will you carry this bag for me?

- **Suggestion**

Shall we play tennis?

- **Parting remark**

I'll see you tomorrow.

2 Complete each sentence (1–6) with one of the endings (a–f).

More than one answer may be possible.

1 As soon as I hear from Helen,^e.....

2 By the time Mary arrives,

3 Please take a seat

4 This time next week

5 The next time you see me

6 We'll have time to have some lunch

a until the dentist is ready.

b the match will be over.

c I'll have had my hair cut and you won't recognize me.

d before the train leaves.

e I'll ask her to phone you.

f we'll be enjoying ourselves on holiday.