



FUTURE

will/going to and the Present Continuous

Form

Positive and negative

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| I He They | 'll won't | help you. watch TV tonight. |
| I'm/I'm not She's/She isn't We're/We aren't | going to | |
| I'm/I'm not He's/He isn't You're/You aren't | catching the 10 o'clock train. | |

Question

| | | |
|-----------|------------------------------|---------|
| What time | will you are you going to | arrive? |
| | are you meeting the manager? | |

Note

We avoid saying *going to come* or *going to go*.

We're coming tomorrow.

When are you going home?

Use

Plans, decisions, and intentions (*will* and *going to*)

will

Will is used as a modal auxiliary verb to express a decision, intention, or offer made at the moment of speaking. We saw this use in Unit 4. (See 4.4.) Remember that you can't use the present tense for this use.

I'll have the steak, please. NOT ~~*I have the steak.*~~
I'll see you tomorrow. Bye! NOT ~~*I see you tomorrow.*~~
Give me a call sometime. We'll go out for coffee.
'Jeff, there's someone at the door!' 'OK, I'll get it.'

going to

Going to is used to express a future plan, decision, or intention made before the moment of speaking.

When I grow up, I'm going to be a doctor.
Jane and Peter are going to get married after they graduate.
We're going to paint this room blue.

Facts and predictions (*will* and *going to*)

will

The most common use of *will* is as an auxiliary verb to show future time. It expresses a future fact or prediction. It is called the pure future or the Future Simple.

We'll be away for two weeks.
Those flowers won't grow under the tree. It's too dark.
Our love will last forever.
You'll be sick if you eat all those sweets!

Will for a prediction can be based more on an opinion than a fact.

I don't think Laura will do very well in her exam. She doesn't do any work.

I am convinced that inflation will fall to three per cent next year.

going to

Going to can also express a prediction, especially when it is based on a present fact. There is evidence now that something is certain to happen.

She's going to have a baby. (We can see she's pregnant.)
Our team is going to win the match. (It's four-nil, and there are only five minutes left to play.)
It isn't going to rain today. (Look at that beautiful blue sky.)

Note

Sometimes there is no difference between *will* and *going to*.

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|---|
| This government | will ruin is going to ruin | the country with its stupid economic policies. |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|---|

Arrangements (Present Continuous)

The Present Continuous can be used to express a future arrangement between people. It usually refers to the near future.

We're going out with Jeremy tonight.
I'm having my hair cut tomorrow.
What are we having for lunch?

Think of the things you might put in your diary to remind you of what you are doing over the next few days and weeks. These are the kinds of events that are often expressed by the Present Continuous for the future. The verbs express some kind of activity or movement.

I'm meeting Peter tonight.
The Taylors are coming for dinner.
I'm seeing the doctor in the morning.

Remember that you can't use the present tense for this use.

We're going to a party on Saturday night.
 NOT ~~*We go to a party on Saturday night.*~~
We're catching the 10 o'clock train.
 NOT ~~*We catch the 10 o'clock train.*~~
What are you doing this evening?
 NOT ~~*What do you do this evening?*~~

Sometimes there is no difference between an agreed arrangement (Present Continuous) and an intention (*going to*).

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| We're going to get We're getting | married in the spring. |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|



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To talk about the future, we use *will*, *going to*, the present simple and the present continuous.

B1 Will

| | |
|--|----------------|
| I/you/he/she/it/we/they will ('ll) + verb | I'll pay. |
| I/you/he/she/we/it/they will not (won't) + verb | She won't pay. |
| Will I/you/he/she/it/we/they + verb? | Will you pay? |

We use *will*

- ♦ to say what we know or believe about the future (often with *maybe*, *I think*, *I expect* and *I hope*):
I'll be 17 next week. (= he knows this)
Everybody **will do** shopping by computer in a few years' time. (= he believes this)
I **expect** I'll be asleep all day.
- ♦ when the speaker decides something at the moment he/she speaks.
I'll have a coffee with you. (= she decides now)

B2 Going to

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| am/is/are going to + verb | We're going to see the film. |
| am/is/are not going to + verb | I'm not going to see the film. |
| am/is/are ... going to + verb? | Are you going to see the film? |

We use *going to*

- ♦ when we can see that something is certain to happen:
The plane **is going to** land.
 - ♦ to talk about plans:
We're **going to** see the new James Bond film. (= we decided earlier)
 - ▲ We can often use *going to* or *will* to talk about the future:
I'm **going to** be 17 next week. = I'll be 17 next week.
- We use *will* more often when we write, but *going to* when we speak.

B3 Present continuous

We use the present continuous (see Unit 4)

- ♦ for plans already made when we know or guess the time:
What **are you doing** tonight? (= what plans have you got?)
I'm **meeting** a designer at 2.30. (= he has an appointment)
- ▲ We can often use the present continuous or *going to* to talk about plans:
We're **spending** the weekend at the seaside. = We're **going to** spend the weekend at the seaside.

B4 Present simple

We use the present simple (see Unit 4) for timetables (trains, planes etc.) and for programmes (films, classes etc.):

My flight **leaves** Rome at 11 pm on Saturday and it **arrives** in London at 1 am.
The film **starts** at nine o'clock.