

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
I	I am going to speak.	I am not going to speak.	Am I going to speak?
you / we / they	You are going to speak.	You are not going to speak.	Are you going to speak?
he / she / it	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 2nd 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.

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

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

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

- 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.

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

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

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

3. Match the pairs

- | | |
|--|---|
| 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>