

UNIT 5

Introduction to future forms

There is no future tense in English as there is in many European languages. However, English has several forms that can refer to the future. Three of these are *will*, *going to*, and the Present Continuous.

I'll see you later. (will)

We're going to see a film tonight. Do you want to come? (going to)

I'm seeing the doctor tomorrow evening. (Present Continuous)

The difference between them is *not* about near or distant future, or about certainty. The speaker chooses a future form depending on how the speaker sees the future event. Is it a plan, a decision, an intention, an offer, a prediction, or an arrangement? This is the important question to ask when choosing a future form. There is more about this in Use below.

5.1 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 flight. | |

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 next month.

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 friendship 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*.

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| In September he | will start is going to start | his course at university. |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|

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 the cinema on Saturday evening.

NOT ~~*We go to the cinema on Saturday evening.*~~

We're catching the 10 o'clock flight.

NOT ~~*We catch the 10 o'clock flight.*~~

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*).

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <i>We're going to get We're getting</i> | <i>married in the spring.</i> |
|---|-------------------------------|



5

On the move

Future forms • The weather • Travelling around


TEST YOUR GRAMMAR

- 1 Match a sentence in A with a sentence in B. Underline the verb forms that refer to the future. What is the difference between them?

| A | B |
|--|--|
| 1 The phone's ringing. | 2 I think it's going to rain. |
| 2 Look at those black clouds! | 4 Don't worry! The course will be over soon. |
| 3 What are you doing this evening? | 5 We might go to Alexandria, or we might go to Athens. |
| 4 I'm sick and tired of studying! | 1 I'll get it! |
| 5 Where are you going on your holiday? | 3 I'm staying at home. I'm going to watch a DVD. |

- 2 Answer the questions about you.

• What are you doing after class today? • What's the weather forecast for tomorrow? • Where are you going?



GRAMMAR SPOT

- 1 Look at the future forms in these sentences from the conversation:

It's on my list. I'm going to buy some.

Good idea! I'll get a loaf.

In each sentence when did Ben make his decision? Before speaking, or at the moment of speaking?

- 2 Which of these sentences expresses a future possibility, which a prediction, and which a future arrangement?

We're playing tennis this afternoon.

I might stop at Nick's.

I'll be back before then.

▶▶ Grammar Reference 5.1 p141

What do you think will happen?

What do you think will happen?

- 3 Make sentences using *I think ... will* and the prompts in A. Match them with a sentence in B.

I think Jerry will win the tennis match. He's been playing really well lately.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 Jerry/win the tennis match | 5 But we'd better get going. |
| 2 it/be a nice day tomorrow | 1 He's been playing really well lately. |
| 3 I/pass my exam on Friday | 2 The forecast is for warm and dry weather. |
| 4 you/like the film | 6 You have the right qualifications and plenty of experience. |
| 5 we/get to the airport in time | 4 It's a wonderful story, and the acting is excellent. |
| 6 you/get the job | 3 I've been studying for weeks. |



My kind of holiday

He travels for his job, but when it's his own holiday, Kevin Saunders stays at home.

Kevin Saunders has his own travel agency in Mayfair, London that sends people all over the world on their dream holidays. He needs to know where he's sending them, so he goes on **working** holidays four or five times a year.

“ My ideal holiday

My ideal holiday has a little bit of everything. I like lazing on a beach with a pile of books, but then I get bored and I need to do something. I like exploring new places, especially on foot, and nosing around in shops, museums, and restaurants. I'm very into trying local foods.

However, I must confess that my favourite 'holiday resort' is home. I travel so much in my job that just waking up in my own bed is heaven. I potter around the house in my pyjamas, read the paper, do some gardening, shop for some food, then make a delicious meal in the evening and watch a film on TV.

My business holidays

I have three trips coming up. I'm looking forward to going to Canada soon, where I'm staying for four nights at the Ice Hotel. This is a giant igloo situated in Montmorency Fall Park, just 20 minutes from downtown Quebec. It is made from 4,500 tons of snow and 250 tons of ice, and it takes 5 weeks to build. It will stay open for three months. When the spring arrives, it will melt. Then it will be built again for next year - maybe in a different place! Each room is supplied with a sleeping bag made from deer skins. The hotel has two art galleries featuring ice sculptures, and an ice cinema.

In complete contrast to the Ice Hotel, I'm going to Dubai the following month, to stay a few days at the spectacular Burj al-Arab, which means the Arabian Tower. It's shaped like a giant sail, and it rises dramatically out of the beautiful blue water. Each room has sea views. I really want to try the restaurant in the tube at the top next to the helipad. Other must-dos include shopping in the markets, called *souks*. (You can buy designer clothes,

perfumes, and spices, but what I want is some gold jewellery for my mother.) I'm also going to visit the camel races.

The next trip, different again, is to Baobab Rivers, in Selous, Tanzania, for a seven-day safari and I'm looking forward to a visit to my favourite resort spas where I can get a total



REVEAL