

1. Future Tenses

1.1. The Simple Future Tense

Simple future has two different forms in English: "will" and "be going to." Although the two forms can sometimes be used interchangeably, they often express two very different meanings. These different meanings might seem too abstract at first, but with time and practice, the differences will become clear. Both "will" and "be going to" refer to a specific time in the future.

We can also use the modal verb "shall" to create the future tense, but this is generally reserved for more formal or polite English, and it is not very common in everyday speech and writing, especially in American English.

The simple future (also called future simple or future indefinite) is a verb tense which is used to show that an action will take place at a specific time in the future. The simple future is also used to talk about future habits and future generalizations.

a. Form

Will: [will + VERB]

Affirmative: The modal verb will + the base form of the verb.

- The Queen **will be** in Rome tomorrow.
- I **will definitely arrive** on time.
- He'll **help** you with that heavy suitcase.

Negative: Add not after will (often contracted as won't)

- She **won't do** her homework.
- He **won't be** at the fair tomorrow. They **won't see** him there.

Interrogative: Invert the subject with will.

- **Will they be** late?
- **Will he be** at the fair tomorrow? **Will they see** him there?

Be Going To: [am/is/are + going to + VERB]

- You **are going to meet** Jane tonight. / **He's going to work.**
- **Are you going to meet** Jane tonight? / **Are you going to participate** in next round?
- You **are not going to meet** Jane tonight. / They're **not going to leave.**

Shall: [(I, we) shall + VERB]

We can use **shall** for the future, but only in the first person, after **I** or **we**.

- **I will be /I shall be** on holiday in August.
- We **will know /We shall know** the results soon
- I **shall** be there.
- I **shan't** go.
- **Shall** I go?

a) **The Use:** The simple future tense is used:

1- **To talk about the future**

- John **will** meet us in the restaurant at 8 o'clock.

2- **"Will" to Express a Voluntary Action when we talk about WILLINGNESS to do something**

"Will" often suggests that a speaker will do something voluntarily. A voluntary action is one the speaker offers to do for someone else. Often, we use "will" to respond to someone else's complaint or request for help. We also use "will" when we request that someone help us or volunteer to do something for us. Similarly, we use "will not" or "won't" when we refuse to voluntarily do something or UNWILLINGNESS to do something (e.g. reluctance, refusal):

- **I will** give you another opportunity to get the correct answer.
- I **will translate** the email, so Mr. Smith can read it.
- **Will you help** me move this heavy table?
- I **won't do** all the housework myself!

Notice that we can also talk about the refusal of a thing to work in the way it should:

- The key **won't** fit the lock.

3- **for a simple statement of future fact : (state future facts)**

We use **will** (or **won't**) to indicate that we think a *present* or *future* situation is CERTAIN:

- Tickets for the stadium **will cost** £5.00.
- You **will know** that John and Sheila are engaged. (= you already know)

4- **to express an instant decision (decision made at the moment of speaking):**

You decide to do sth spontaneously at the time of speaking.

- A: The bag is too heavy. B: I'll **help** you.
- A: Did you call Ali? B: Oh no, I forgot. I'll **call** him now.
- A: I'm really hungry. B: I'll **make** some sandwiches.

5- **to express prediction for the future based on our opinion or our experience or knowledge/ past experience:**

• Why not come over at the weekend? The children **will** enjoy meeting you again.

• I expect they **ll go** to the theatre tomorrow.

• Try that dress. It **ll suit** you.

6- **with future probability ‘I (don’t) think, I’m sure, definitely, may be, I guess, definitely.’** \implies how certain you are something will happen

• I feel hungry, I **think I’ll have** something to eat.

• **I don’t think I’ll go** out today, I feel tired.

7- **Will can be used to express:**

(a) **promises:** I will remember to buy you a present at the fair.

I won’t tell anyone. I promise.

(b) **offers:** I’ll help you to carry the bag.

I’ll peel the potatoes. - Oh, thank you.

(c) **invitation:** Will you come to the party?

Will you have a cup of tea?

(d) **threats:** Stop or I’ll call the police.

Give me the money or I’ll tell my mother.

8- **Will can also be used to order things and to ask someone to do something:**

• (In the restaurant) **I’ll have** a soup and a salad, please.

• Will you shut the door, please?

9- **Shall is used with the first person singular and plural for permissions, suggestions and offers:**

• I have got no money. What shall I do? (what do you suggest ?)

• Shall we go for a walk?

• Shall I get the tickets for the theatre?

**Shall* is not used in American English.

The ‘going to’ future is used:

1- **To make a prediction based on a present situation/present evidence:**

When we PREDICT that something will happen in the future because we have some evidence for it now. It may be that we predict an event that is just about to happen on the basis of something that we feel, see (etc.) now:

• The sky is cloudy. Do you think **it is going** to rain?

• He can’t see the nails on the piece of wood. He’s going to hurt his foot.

2- **to express an intention but perhaps not arranged, i.e., we have decided but perhaps not arranged to do it:**

- ‘The house is dirty.’ – ‘Yes, I know. I’m going to clean later.’
- Is Ali going to apply for the job?

3- Be going to" to Express a Plan or a decision

"Be going to" expresses that something is a plan. It expresses the idea that a person intends to do something in the future. It does not matter whether the plan is realistic or not.

- A: When **are** we **going to meet** each other tonight?
B: We **are going to meet** at 6 PM.
 - I **’m going to be** an actor when I grow up.
 - Michelle **is going to begin** medical school next year.
- } This has been planned

N.B. ‘be going to’ can be used in the past to express an intention in the past but which was not accomplished.

- I was going to change my son from his school but I decided not to.
- The boy was going to cross the road when the policeman shouted and asked him to stop.
The situation was going to be very bad but the director resolved the problem at the last moment.

Let’s compare the uses of the ‘be going to’ with ‘will’

Will

1-Used to talk about facts in the future.

- *My son will be six next month.*

2-Used for an instant decision.

- *‘Pineapples are not on special offer this week.’ - ‘In that case, I’ll buy two’*

However, notice that in a formal style, we use **will** rather than **going to** to talk about future events that have been previously arranged in some detail:

- *The meeting **will** begin at 10.00 am.
Coffee **will** be available from 9.30 onwards.*

3-Used to make a prediction based on previous knowledge or experience.

- *I think she’ll succeed the exam.*

be going to

1-Used to express an intention

- *I’m going to organize a party for my son’s birthday.*

2-Used for a decision already made.

- *When I’ve saved up enough money, I’m going to buy a camera.*

3-Used to make a prediction based on a present situation. or it may be that we can predict an event because we have been told that it will happen

- *Did you know that Bob and Kath **are going to** get married?*
- *The clouds are dark. It’s going to rain.*

We can see that it is going to rain from the clouds in sky now

N.B: **going to** is preferred in spoken English and **will** is preferred in formal written English

IMPORTANT

In the simple future, it is not always clear which USE the speaker has in mind. Often, there is more than one way to interpret a sentence's meaning.

Adverb Placement

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

- You will **never** help him. You are **never** going to meet Jane.
- Will you **ever** help him? Are you **ever** going to meet Jane?