

26 Present tenses for the future

A The present continuous for arrangements

Tom: *Are you doing anything this evening?*
Nick: *Yes, I'm going to an ice hockey match.*
The Tigers are playing the Kings.
I bought my ticket yesterday.



We use the present continuous for what someone has arranged to do in the future. Here Nick has arranged to go to the match. (He has bought a ticket.) Here are some more examples.

I'm meeting Harriet at six o'clock. David is coming round later on.
We're having a party tomorrow. Sarah is going to Paris next week.

We also use the present continuous to talk about things happening now (see Unit 4).

Present: *We're having a party at the moment.*

Future: *We're having a party tomorrow.*

Here the phrase of time shows whether we mean the present or the future. But sometimes there is no phrase of time, as when Nick says *The Tigers are playing the Kings*. Here it is clear from Tom's question that the conversation is about a future event.

The present continuous for the future and *be going to* (Unit 24A) have similar meanings.

We're having a party next week. (We have made the arrangements.) *We're going to have a party next week.* (We intend / We have decided to have one.)

Often we can use either form.

I'm meeting / I'm going to meet Harriet at six o'clock.

B The present simple for a timetable

Mark: *What time does your train leave tomorrow?*
Sarah: *Seven twenty-three in the morning.*
It gets into Paris at eleven twenty-three.

We can use the present simple for the future when we are talking about a timetable, usually a public one such as a train timetable.

The train leaves at seven twenty-three tomorrow morning.

The match starts at half past seven.

Next Friday is the thirteenth.

I've got the tour details here. We spend three days in Rome.

Compare the present simple for repeated actions (see Unit 6A).

The train leaves at seven twenty-three every morning.



Be to and be about to

We use *be to* for a future event that is officially arranged. It is often used in news reports.

The Queen is to visit Portugal in November.

The Student Games are to take place in Melbourne next year.

We could also use the present continuous here.

The Queen is visiting Portugal in November.

We use *be about to* for the very near future.

The plane is at the end of the runway. It is about to take off.

Do you want to say goodbye to our visitors? They're about to leave.

Practice

Write these sentences, putting the verbs into the future simple or present simple.

- 1 I (give) it to them when they (visit) us.
I'll give it to them when they visit us.
- 2 T (not send) the parcel until I (hear) from you.
I won't send the parcel until I hear from you.
- 3 As soon as they (phone) me, I (contact) you.
- 4 I (see) you before I (fly) to Paris.
- 5 They (send) you the money before they (leave).
- 6 When I (talk) to him, I (give) him your news.
- 7 She (visit) her parents before she (go) to the airport.
- 8 I (finish) this when I (be) at the office.
- 9 I (send) you a postcard when I (get) to Bermuda.
- 10 She (do) her homework before she (go) out.
- 11 After I (visit) the hospital, I (go) and see her parents.
- 12 I (phone) Mary when we (get) to San Francisco.
- 13 I (call) you as soon as we (sign) the contract.
- 14 He (not do) anything before you (tell) him to.
- 15 You (be) very surprised when you (meet) him.

1 Present, past and future (A-B)

Rachel has received a letter from a friend of hers who left college last year.
Find the sentences which refer to the future and write them below.

I'm really enjoying my work at the store. I'm learning lots about the job. Soon they're moving me to another store - in Birmingham. They told me about it last week. I'll be leaving here at the end of the month. I feel a bit sad about that. Luckily they'll find a flat for me.

The time is going very quickly. I've been here three months. The training programme finishes next summer. I like the work, and I want to stay with the company. They'll decide about that next year. I'm just hoping for the best.

► *Soon they're moving me to another store — in Birmingham.*

- 1
- 2
- 3

2 Present and future (A-D)

Say if the second sentence is about the present or the future. Look at the phrases of time such as *at the moment* and *on Friday*.

► I'm busy. I'm cooking a meal at the moment. *present*

- 1 I'm nervous. I'm cooking for ten people on Friday.
- 2 I don't want to go out. I might watch a video later.
- 3 There's football on TV tonight. I might watch it.
- 4 We're off at last. We arrive in New York at seven.
- 5 This train is never on time. We always arrive late.

3 Present and future (A-D)

Read each pair of sentences and then answer the question about them.

► a) I'll see you on Thursday.

b) I saw you on Thursday.

Which sentence is about the future? *a*

1 a) I'm going to Manchester. I'm waiting for a connecting train.

b) I'm going to get a train to Manchester, changing at Birmingham.

Which is spoken during the journey?

2 a) We'll know the results of the tests next week.

b) We might know the results of the tests next week.

Which sentence is more certain?

3 a) I'm doing two exams this year.

b) I'm doing some work at the moment.

In which sentence has the action already started?...

4 a) What time do we arrive in Swansea?

b) What time will we arrive in Swansea?

Which question is more likely if you are travelling by car?

5 a) I'm eating at the Thai restaurant tonight.

b) I'll eat at the Thai restaurant tonight.

Which would you say if you've booked a table?

2.15 Complete this short dialogue.

Adam: Come on, Carrie, it's sunny outside. Let's go for a walk, (1) we?

Carrie: Who (2) do the laundry?

Adam: I promise I (3) do it later.

Carrie: Wow. Okay. I (4) put my shoes on right now. Let's go!

2.16 Complete this text with appropriate forms of the verbs and contracted forms of will.

change feel ✓have know not become not go not make not spend
save sit try

My father says that money is like water to me because it runs through my fingers. It's time I started saving. I have no money in the bank and if I don't start soon, I'll never any savings. So, during the next twelve months, I (1) to save £25 from each month's pay. That means I (2) as much money on things that aren't essential. I guess I (3) out very much and I (4) probably at home on Saturday nights in front of the TV. I (5) rich that way, but I (6) certainly better if I have some money in the bank. By the end of the first year, if I'm successful, I (7) £300 and I (8) that I (9) all those sacrifices in vain. When my father sees that, maybe he (10) his opinion too.

2.17 Using a dictionary if necessary, complete each sentence with a noun and a verb, using appropriate forms of will or be going to.

anticipation foresight premonition happen have take

- 1 My dog runs to the door in when it thinks I it for a walk.
- 2 Marla told me she had a that something bad
- 3 If you hadn't had the to bring water, we nothing to drink.

2.18 Complete the dialogue with these verbs, using the present simple or be going to.

ask break down get give like not have not know not pay say tell

Laura: Trevor thinks I (1) him £800 for his old car today, but I (2) that much money until I (3) paid later in the month. They (4) us until the last day of each month.

Carol: What (5) you him when he (6) you for the money?

Laura: I (7) what I (8) to him. I'm not sure about the car.

Carol: (9) you it now?

Laura: I just worry that it (10) later.

EXERCISES

1 *If possible, use the present simple of an appropriate verb to complete these sentences. If the present simple is not correct, use will + infinitive. (A & B)*

- 1 Ellis's new play.....at the Grand Theatre next week.
- 2 With more practice she.....an excellent violinist.
- 3 National No-Smoking week.....on October 24th.
- 4 On tonight's programme we.....to the deputy president about the latest unemployment figures.
- 5 In a few moments, I.....over there and give the signal to start running.
- 6 The eclipse.....at three minutes past midday.
- 7 Dr Brown.....available again at 9.00 tomorrow.
- 8 The door in front of us.....automatically in a few moments.
- 9 We.....Amsterdam on Tuesday morning, but we.....Sydney until Thursday evening.

- 10 I.....
to the main point
of my talk in a
little while.



2 *Expand these notes to make a sentence beginning with the word(s) given. You will need to decide the order in which to place them. Use the present simple in the first clause and will or won't in the second. (C)*

- 1 he / need complete rest / another two months he / come out / hospital
After He comes out of hospital, he will need complete rest for another two months.
- 2 I decide / buy / the house I / have / look at / an expert
Before...
- 3 we / not let her / walk / school alone she / a little older
Until...
- 4 he / take / work more seriously he / fail / his exams
Unless...
- 5 one pen / run out I / take two into / exam room
In case...
- 6 I / meet you outside / cinema / 8.00 I / not / see you after school
If...
- 7 traffic / not too bad I / pick you up / work
Provided...

3 *Which of the verbs is correct or more appropriate? Underline one or both. (D)*

- 1 Tonight I'm going to check that Susan does / will do her homework correctly.
- 2 By the time the book is published next year, no-one will be interested in what scandalous claims it makes / will make.
- 3 Some people believe that the earth is destroyed / will be destroyed by a nuclear accident.
- 4 The new regulations mean that businesses have to / will have to complete the form by 1st April.
- 5 Jim just phoned. He says that he is / will be with us tonight.
- 6 It says in the programme that the concert finishes / will finish at 10.20.

1 The present continuous (A)

Read the conversation and say if the verb refers to the present or the future.

Mark: (▶) What are you reading, Claire?

Claire: Oh, it's a guidebook to Brazil. (1) I'm going there next month. (2) My sister and I are having a holiday there. (3) I am really looking forward to it. (4) We're spending three weeks in Rio. (5) So I'm finding out about all the things we can do there.

▶ present	3
1	4
2	5

2 The present continuous for arrangements (A)

For each situation write a sentence with the present continuous. Use the verbs in brackets.

▶ Mike and Harriet have accepted an invitation to Tom's party next week, (go)

They're going to Tom's party next week.

- 1 Laura has agreed to be in the office on Saturday, (work)
- 2 Claire has just bought a plane ticket to Cairo dated 15 May, (fly)
- 3 Mark has arranged a meeting with his boss at four o'clock this afternoon, (see)
- 4 Matthew and Daniel have booked a tennis court for tomorrow afternoon, (play)

3 Present tenses for the future (A-B)

Put the verbs into the present continuous or the present simple.

Emma: (▶) *Are you doing* (you / do) anything tonight?

Matthew: Yes, (1)..... (I / go) to the station to meet my friend Richard.

(2)..... (he / stay) here for the weekend, remember? His train

(3)..... (get) in at eight fifteen.

Emma: Oh, of course. I'd forgotten about that.

Matthew: Maybe we'll see you later. What (4)..... (you / do) tonight?

Emma: Oh (5)..... (I / go) to the cinema with Vicky and Rachel and a couple of other people. The film (6)..... (finish) quite early, so

(7)..... (we / go) to a pizza place afterwards.

4 Be to and be about to (C)

Complete these sentences on the news. Some are spoken by the newsreader in the studio and some by reporters on the spot. Use *be to* or *be about to* with the verbs in brackets.

- 7 The new museum is *to open* (open) in the autumn.
- 7 The Prime Minister is at the microphone now. He *is about to start* (start) speaking.
- 1 The leading runner is nearly there now. She (win) the race.
- 2 Taxes..... (go) up from next April.
- 3 The US President (visit) Ireland in the new year.
- 4 The riot isn't over yet, but the police are here. They..... (move) in.
- 5 The talks on world trade (take) place later this year.

EXERCISES

12.1 *These sentences refer to the future. Complete them with either going to or the present continuous, whichever is correct or more likely, using any appropriate verb. (B)*

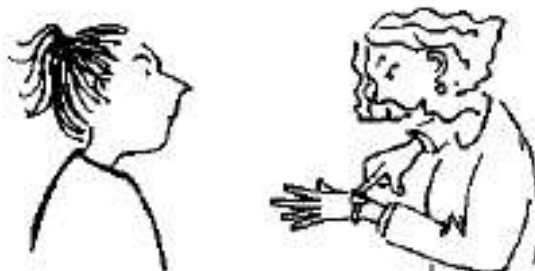
- 1 I can't go any further. I.....on that bench for a while.
- 2 The game.....at two o'clock tomorrow. I hope you can be there.
- 3 The service here is very slow. I.....to the manager if we're not served soon.
- 4 I have a right to be heard, and no-one.....me from putting my side of the argument.
- 5 The two leaders.....for talks later this afternoon.
- 6 The bank has announced that it.....its interest rates by one per cent from tomorrow.
- 7 Are you.....my questions or not?
- 8 I have to get up early tomorrow. I.....a physics class at 8.00 in the morning.
- 9 Before I apply for the job, I.....more information about it.
- 10 Brazil.....Colombia in today's final.

12.2 *These sentences refer to the future. Correct them where necessary (with either present continuous or going to,) or put ✓ if they are already correct. (C & D)*

- 1 Unless aid arrives within the next few days, thousands are starving.
- 2 There are going to be more of us at the picnic than we'd thought.
- 3 I'm tired. I'm going to go to bed.
- 4 'I can't get to the match after all.' 'That's a pity. Dave's being very disappointed.'
- 5 Clear the area! The bomb's exploding.
- 6 In future, the company is going to be known as 'Communications International'.
- 7 I've redecorated the bedroom. Do you think Jane is liking it when she gets home?
- 8 Whether we like it or not, within a few years biotechnology is transforming every aspect of human life.
- 9 It's not a deep cut, but it's leaving a scar.
- 10 He is going to inherit his father's fortune.
- 11 Nina is going to go to Switzerland next week on business.

12.3 *Which of the three answers is wrong or very unlikely. What is the difference in meaning between the other two? (A-D and Unit 11B)*

- 1 She thinks.....living away from home when he goes to University.
a Dan will enjoy b Dan is going to enjoy c Dan is enjoying
- 2 I'm sorry, but I can't come for dinner.....to York tonight.
a I'll drive b I'm going to drive c I'm driving
- 3 Did you know.....a new car next week?
a I'll get b I'm going to get c I'm getting
- 4 'I'm going out now, Mum.'
'Well, I hope.....home too late.
Remember you've got to go to school tomorrow.'
a you won't get
b you aren't going to get
c you aren't getting



EXERCISES

1 Complete these sentences with an appropriate verb (or verb + preposition) in either the future continuous or the present continuous for the future. In which sentences are both possible? Where only one form is possible, consider why the other is not. (A&B)

- 1 Mary Slater.....her work on the radio tonight.
- 2 A recent UN report has suggested that by the year 2040, 15 per cent of the world's population malaria.
- 3 I've got a job in Stockholm so I.....there for the next two years.
- 4 I can't believe it. Dave and Sarah.....married.
- 5 You can have my old boots if you like. Now that I've got a new pair I.....them again.
- 6 The council.....road repairs over the next two days.
- 7 Most of my family.....to our wedding next month.
- 8 We have a slight delay because of the poor weather, but we.....off as soon as possible.

Choose a verb that can complete both sentences in the pair. Use will/won't (+ infinitive) in one sentence and the future continuous (will/won't be + -ing) in the other. (A & C)

drive go open organise tell try

- 1 a Matsuki.....their first factory in Europe next year.
b Here, give me the bottle. I.....it for you.
- 2 a Keno.....to win his third gold medal in the next Olympics.
b I.....to get over to see you, but I've got a very busy weekend coming up.
- 3 a Sam.....to the dentist. He simply refuses to make an appointment.
b I.....to the party, I'm afraid; I have to be in Spain that weekend.
- 4 a 'How old is he?' 'I've no idea, but I'm sure he.....you if you ask him.'
b In this programme I.....you how to cook duck in a lemon sauce.
- 5 a It's odd to think that this time tomorrow we.....to Madrid.
b He.....anywhere without first looking at a road map.
- 6 a I won't have time to meet you next weekend, I'm afraid. I.....the school timetable for next year.
b Perhaps John.....the games at the party. I'll ask him. He's good at that sort of thing.

Ask about people's plans in a polite way. Use Will you be -ing...? (D)

- 1 You want to use the computer. David is using it now.
Will you be using the computer for long / for much longer?
- 2 You want some things from the supermarket. Ann is just leaving the house.
- 3 You are going to see a film with Jo, who has a car. A lift would be nicer than the bus.
- 4 You want to buy Jack's car but you don't know whether he plans to sell it.

Look in your diary and make some sentences about your definite future plans. Use either the future continuous or the present continuous. (A-C)

Example: I'll be going to university in September.
I'm leaving for Prague on the 25th.

EXERCISES

- 1 Choose a verb to complete the sentences. Use *be to + infinitive* if possible, and *will + infinitive* if not. (A)

appear arrive become begin feel fit move resign

- 1 A man.....in court today after a car he was driving killed two pedestrians.
- 2 The danger is that the bacteria.....more resistant to antibiotics over time.
- 3 The Environment Department has announced that it.....2,000 jobs out of the capital.
- 4 When the news is broken to him, he.....both upset and angry.
- 5 Work.....this week on the new Thames bridge.
- 6 The Business Information Group said today that Brian Murdoch.....as its executive director.
- 7 We are all hoping that warmer weather.....soon.
- 8 No more than six people.....around the table comfortably.

- 2 Here are some newspaper extracts. What verb do you think has been removed from the *if*-clause, and with what form - *be to + infinitive* or *present simple*? Choose from the following verbs. (B)

bring collapse compare elect fail flourish improve operate rise

- 1 We recognise the urgent need to improve international economic performance if we sustainable benefits to millions faced with poverty.
- 2 The allocation of much-needed additional resources is necessary if we the range of provisions for all children regardless of their ability.
- 3 If John.....in the vote next week, he will have to work with whoever the party chooses as its deputy leader.
- 4 Middle managers are being retrained for the new information skills they will need if they.....effectively.
- b An all-out trade war seems likely if the two Presidents.....to agree at tomorrow's meeting.
- 6 The European Union, if it.....as a community, must find better ways of consulting its citizens.

- 3 Complete the sentence with either the *future perfect* or the *future perfect continuous* for each situation. (C & D)

- 1 Simon started to learn Spanish when he was 25. He is still learning Spanish.
When He's 40 he. will have been learning Spanish for 15 years.
- 2 Every day, Peter eats three bars of chocolate on the way home from school.
Before He gets home. from school tonight Peter...
- 3 So many people enter the New York Marathon that the last runners start several minutes after the ones at the front.
By the time the last runners start, the ones at the front...
- 4 I started writing this book 3 years ago next month.
By next month I...
- 5 The company is spending \$5 million on developing the software before it goes on sale.
By the time the software goes on sale, the company...
- 6 I'm going to paint the front door today. I'll finish it before you get back.
When you get back, I...