

## Explanations

Basic contrasts:  
will, going to,  
present  
continuous

- *Will* is normally known as the predictive future, and describes known facts, or what we suppose true.

*I'll be late home this evening.*

*The company will make a profit next year.*

This can also take the form of an assumption.

*That'll be Jim at the door.* (This means that I suppose it is Jim.)

- *Will* is also used to express an immediate decision.

*I'll take this one.*

- *Be going to* describes intentions or plans. At the moment of speaking the plans have already been made.

*I'm going to wait here until Carol gets back.*

*Going to* is also used to describe an event whose cause is present or evident.

*Look at that tree! It's going to fall.*

Compare the following with the examples in the first bullet point:

*I'm going to be late this evening. I've got lots of paperwork to finish off.*

*The figures are good. I can see the company is going to make a profit this year.*

Decisions expressed with *going to* refer to a more distant point in the future.

- Present continuous describes fixed arrangements, especially social and travel arrangements. A time reference is usually included. Note the strong similarity to the *going to* future. *I am having a party next week* and *I am going to have a party next week* are communicating the same message.

Future continuous

- This describes an event which will be happening at a future point.

*Come round in the morning. I'll be painting in the kitchen.*

- It can also describe events which are going to happen anyway, rather than events which we choose to make happen.

*I won't bother to fix a time to see you, because I'll be calling into the office anyway several times next week.*

- In some contexts future continuous also sounds more polite than *will*.

*Will you be going to the shops later? If you go, could you get me some milk?*

- It can also be used to refer to fixed arrangements and plans.

*The band will be performing live in Paris this summer.*

Future perfect

- This has both simple and continuous forms, and refers to time which we look back at from a future point.

*In two year's time I'll have finished the book.*

*By the end of the month, I'll have been working for this firm for a year.*

It can also be used to express an assumption on the part of the speaker.

*You **won't have heard** the news, of course.*

(This means that I assume you have not heard the news.)

**Other ways of referring to the future**

*Is/are to be*

This is used to describe formal arrangements.

*All students **are to assemble** in the hall at 9.00.*

See also Grammar 11 and 12 for uses expressing obligation.

*Be about to, be on the point of, be due to, just/just about to*

*Be about to* and *be on the point of* both refer to the next moment.

*I think the play **is about to** start now.*

*Mary **is on the point of** resigning.*

*Be due to* refers to scheduled times.

*The play **is due to** start in five minutes.*

*Ann's flight **is due** at 6.20.*

**Just** can be used to describe something on the point of happening.

*Hurry up! The train **is just leaving/just about to leave**.*

Present simple and present perfect

Present simple is used to refer to future time in future time clauses.

*When we get there, we'll have dinner.*

Present perfect can also be used instead of present simple when the completion of the event is emphasised.

*When we've had a rest, we'll go out.*

Present simple is also used to describe fixed events which are not simply the wishes of the speaker.

*Tom **retires** in three years.*

Similarly, calendar references use the present simple.

*Christmas **is on a Tuesday** next year.*

**Other future references**

*Hope*

This can be followed by either present or future verb forms.

*I hope it **doesn't** rain. I hope it **won't** rain.*

Other verbs followed by *will*.

Most verbs of thinking can be followed by *will* if there is future reference.

These include: *think, believe, expect, doubt*.

*I **expect** the train will be late. I **doubt** whether United will win.*

*Shall*

The use of *shall* for first person in future reference is generally considered to be restricted to British English and possibly declining in use. See Grammar 11 and 12 for other uses of *shall* and *will*. For some speakers, *shall* is used in formal speech and in written language.

## Practice

This section also includes time phrases used in expressing future time.

Put each verb in brackets into a suitable verb form.

- a) In twenty-four hours' time ... *I'll be relaxing* ..... (I/relax) on my yacht.
- b) There's someone at the door.' That .....(be) the postman.'
- c) By the time you get back Harry.....(leave).
- d) It's only a short trip. I.....(be) back in an hour.
- e) What .....(you/do) this Saturday evening? Would you like to go out?
- f) By the end of the week we.....(decide) what to do.
- g) It.....(not/be) long before Doctor Smith is here.
- h) We'll go to the park when you.....(finish) your tea.
- i) It's very hot in here. I think I.....(faint).
- j) What .....(you/give) Ann for her birthday? Have you decided yet?

### 2 In most lines of this text there is an extra word. Write the extra word, or put a tick if the line is correct.

In August Gordon will then have been at his company for 25 years, 1 *then*.....  
 and he's getting for a bonus of three weeks paid holiday. So we've 2 .....  
 decided to hire a car and drive around Eastern Europe. We'll be 3 .....  
 leaving towards the end of August, and our aim there is to visit as 4 .....  
 many countries as we can. We're flying out to Budapest - soon we're 5 .....  
 due to catch a plane on the 28th day - and then we'll be stopping over 6 .....  
 at a friend's house, before starting our grand tour. We'll most probably 7 .....  
 spend the best part of a week in Hungary. When we've just finished 8 .....  
 there, we'll probably be go to Romania, but beyond that we haven't 9 .....  
 planned too much arrangements. We will know a bit more by the end 10 .....  
 of this week, when we're getting a whole load of brochures from the 11 .....  
 tourist board. We'd like to get to as far as Russia, but realistically I 12 .....  
 doubt whether we'll have time. I hope it won't be too expensive - 13 .....  
 from till now on we'll really have to tighten our belts! I can't wait! 14 .....  
 In just over two months' of time we'll be having the time of our lives! 15 .....

3 Choose the most appropriate continuation for each sentence.



- a) According to the latest forecast, the tunnel **A** .....  
 A will be finished next year. B will have been finished next year.  
 C is finishing next year.
- b) Paula's flight is bound to be late although.....  
 A it arrives at 6.00. B it's due at 6.00. C it's arriving at six.
- c) It's no use phoning Bob at the office, he.....  
 A will be leaving. B is leaving. C will have left.
- d) Everyone says that this year City.....  
 A are going to win the Cup. B are winning the Cup. C win the Cup.
- e) I don't feel like visiting my relatives this year so.....  
 A I won't go. B I'm not going. C I don't go.
- f) You can borrow this calculator, I.....  
 A am not going to need it. B won't have been needing it.  
 C am not needing it.
- g) I'm sorry dinner isn't ready yet, but it.....  
 A is going to be ready in a minute. B will have been ready in a minute.  
 C will be ready in a minute,
- h) Can you send me the results as soon as you.....  
 A hear anything? B are hearing anything? C will have heard anything?
- i) You can try asking Martin for help but.....  
 A it won't do you any good. B it's not doing you any good.  
 C it won't be doing you any good,
- j) Don't worry about the mistake you made, nobody.....  
 A is noticing. B will notice. C will be noticing.

- 4 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given.
- a) I don't suppose you have heard the news.  
won't  
You *won't have heard* ..... the news.
- b) The Prime Minister expects an easy victory for his party in the election.  
believes  
The Prime Minister.....the election easily.
- c) I've been in this company for almost three years.  
will  
By the end of the month.....in this company for three years.
- d) This book will take me two years to write.  
have  
In two years!.....this book.
- e) Scientists are on the point of making a vital breakthrough.  
about  
Scientists are.....a vital breakthrough.
- f) Maria is pregnant again.  
have  
Maria is.....baby.
- g) I'll be home late.  
until  
I.....late.
- h) No one knows what the result of the match is going to be.  
who  
No one knows.....the match.
- i) Don't worry; David won't be late.  
**here**  
Don't worry; David.....time.
- j) Mary and Alan's wedding is next weekend.  
getting  
Mary and Alan.....next weekend.

- 5 Look at the three options A, B and C for each question. Decide which two are correct.



- a) We've run out of fuel. B, C  
 A What will we do now?    B What do we do now?  
 C What are we going to do now?
- b) You can't leave early, .....  
 A we're having a meeting.    B we're going to have a meeting.  
 C we will have a meeting.
- c) Oh dear, I've broken the vase.....  
 A What will your mother say?    B What is your mother going to say?  
 C What is your mother saying?
- d) According to the weather forecast,.....  
 A it'll rain tomorrow.    B it's raining tomorrow.  
 C it's going to rain tomorrow.
- e) I'd like to call round and see you.....  
 A What will you have done by the morning?    B What'll you be doing in the morning?  
 C What are you doing in the morning?
- f) I've got nothing to do tomorrow so.....  
 A I'll get up late.    B I am to get up late.    C I'm going to get up late.
- g) It's my eighteenth birthday next month so.....  
 A I'm on the point of having a party.    B I'm having a party.  
 C I'll be having a party.
- h) Why don't you come with us?.....  
 A It'll be a great trip.    B It's going to be a great trip.    C It's a great trip,
- i) When you get to the airport.....  
 A someone is going to be waiting for you.  
 B someone is due to wait for you.    C someone will be waiting for you.
- j) Shut up, will you!.....  
 A I'm getting really angry.    B I'm going to get really angry in a minute.  
 C I'm getting really angry in a minute.

**6 Underline the correct word or phrase in each sentence.**

- a) I'll be back *after a few minutes/in a few minutes*.
- b) I'm sure that everything will be all right *at the end/in the end*.
- c) Please call me *the moment/exactly when* you hear any news.
- d) I should be back *by the time/at the time* the film begins.
- e) I'm sure Fiona will be here *before long/after a while*.
- f) I can't leave on Tuesday. I won't be ready *until then/by then*.
- g) By *twenty four hours/this time tomorrow* I'll be in Bangkok.
- h) Diana will be retiring *soon/already*.
- i) There will be no official announcements *forthwith/from now on*.
- j) Bye for now. I'll see you *in two weeks' time/two weeks later*.

**7 Complete the common expressions using the words from the box.**

let give be go see come have go be see

- a) I'll see..... what I can do.
- b) I'll..... a look and get back to you.
- c) I'll..... it some thought.
- d) I'll..... you know by tomorrow.
- e) I'll just..... and get it.
- f) I'll..... halves with you.
- g) I'll..... to it.
- h) I'll..... back in a minute.
- i) I'll..... about five minutes.
- j) I'll..... and show you.

Which expression means one of the following?

- 1) I will try and do this for you.
- 2) I'll share it with you.
- 3) I'll fix it/arrange it.

→ SEE ALSO

**Grammar 5: Consolidation**  
**Grammar 8: Conditionals**  
**Grammar 11 and 12: Modals**