

# Talking about the future

Learn about the different verb forms you can use to talk about the future, and do the exercises to practise using them.

## Level: intermediate

When we **know about the future**, we normally use the **present tense**.

1. We use the present simple for something **scheduled**:

*We **have** a lesson next Monday.*

*The train **arrives** at 6.30 in the morning.*

*The holidays **start** next week.*

*It's my birthday tomorrow.*

2. We can use the present continuous for **plans or arrangements**:

*I'm **playing** football tomorrow.*

*They **are coming** to see us tomorrow.*

*We're **having** a party at Christmas.*

3. We use will:

- when we express beliefs about the future:

*It **will be** a nice day tomorrow.*

*I think Brazil **will win** the World Cup.*

*I'm sure you **will enjoy** the film.*

- to mean **want to** or **be willing to**:

*I hope you **will come** to my party.*

*George says he **will help** us.*

- to **make offers and promises** :

*I'll see you tomorrow.*

*We'll **send** you an email.*

- to **talk about offers and promises**:

*Tim **will be** at the meeting.*

*Mary **will help** with the cooking.*

4. We use **be going to**:

- to talk about **plans or intentions**:

*I'm going to drive to work today.*  
*They are going to move to Manchester.*

- to make **predictions** based on **evidence** we can see:

*Be careful! You are going to fall.* (= I can see that you might fall.)  
*Look at those black clouds. I think it's going to rain.* (= I can see that it will rain.)

5. We use will be with an -ing form for something happening before and after **a specific time in the future**:

*I'll be working at eight o'clock. Can you come later?*  
*They'll be waiting for you when you arrive.*

6. We can use **will be with an -ing form** instead of the present continuous or **be going to** when we are talking about **plans, arrangements and intentions**:

*They'll be coming to see us next week.*  
*I'll be driving to work tomorrow.*

7. We often use **verbs like would like, plan, want, mean, hope, expect** to talk about the future:

*What are you going to do next year? I'd like to go to university.*  
*We plan to go to France for our holidays.*  
*George wants to buy a new car.*

8. We use modals **may, might** and **could** when we are **not sure** about the future:

*I might stay at home tonight or I might go to the cinema.*  
*We could see Mary at the meeting. She sometimes goes.*

9. We can use **should** if we think there's a **good chance** of something happening:

*We should be home in time for tea.*  
*The game should be over by eight o'clock.*

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar/english-grammar-reference/talking-about-future>

## Grammar reference: Talking about the future 1

Look at the FUTURE FORMS in the sentences. Match the correct descriptions with the sentences.

9 items remaining

good chance	scheduled event	plan or intention	plan or arrangement	prediction based on evidence
not sure	belief about the future	before and after a specific future time	offer or promise	

1. I'm sure you'LL HAVE a good time in Los Angeles.

2. We MIGHT SEE Catrina at the funeral tomorrow.

3. I'M GOING TO PHONE my bank manager tomorrow.

4. The next course STARTS on 1 July. That's what the website says.

5. The meeting SHOULD BE over by six. They don't usually take more than an hour.

6. I'LL HELP you do the washing up if you like.

7. Bella and I ARE GETTING married in the summer. We've already agreed on the date.

8. This time tomorrow we'LL BE FLYING to New Zealand. We'll be about halfway through the flight.

## Talking about the future 1

1. I'm sure you'LL HAVE a good time in Los Angeles. belief about the future
2. We MIGHT SEE Catrina at the funeral tomorrow. not sure
3. I'M GOING TO PHONE my bank manager tomorrow. plan or intention
4. The next course STARTS on 1 July. That's what the website says. scheduled event
5. The meeting SHOULD BE over by six. They don't usually take more than an hour. good chance
6. I'LL HELP you do the washing up if you like. offer or promise
7. Bella and I ARE GETTING married in the summer. We've already agreed on the date. plan or arrangement
8. This time tomorrow we'LL BE FLYING to New Zealand. We'll be about halfway through the flight. before and after a specific future time
9. We'RE GOING TO RUN OUT of coffee soon. The tin's almost empty. prediction based on evidence