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The future 1: *will, be going to, present continuous, present simple*

I'm going to ask her to marry me.

Tim: How are things with Jo?

Dan: Great! Actually, I've decided I'm going to ask her to marry me.



Tim: Congratulations!

Dan: Thanks. But what if ...?

Tim: Don't worry! She **won't** say no! Not to a good-looking guy like you!

Mike: **Are you going** to Dan's wedding?

Tim: Of course – I'm the best man!

Mike: Oh yes! **Are you giving** a speech? **What are you going to say?** I hope it's **going to be** funny!

Tim: Well, there'll **be** some jokes, so I **hope** it's funny.

Mike: How **are you getting** there? **Are you going to drive?**

Tim: Yes. I'll **give** you a lift if you like.



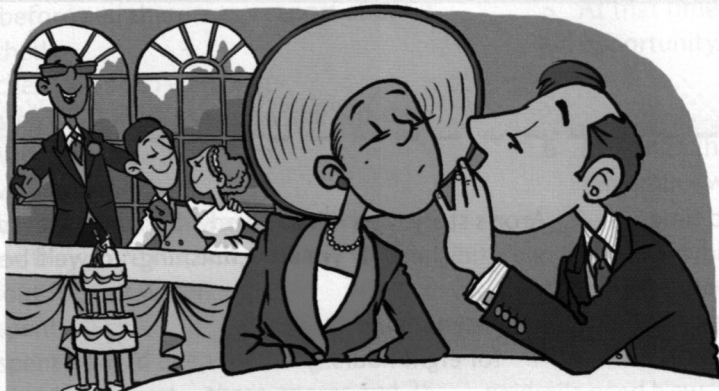
Mike: OK. Great. What time **are you going to leave?**

Tim: Well, the wedding is at 2 and it'll **take** a couple of hours to get there, so ... I think I'll **set off** about 11.30.

Mike: Great! I'll **come** round to your house at about 11.15, then.

Mike: Look, it's Tim. It looks like he's **going to give** his speech.

Sally: Great! This'll **be** interesting.



Mike: Why?

Sally: Because we'll **find** out what Dan's really like. All his secrets. Isn't that what a best man's speech is for?

?

- 1 Who is getting married, and what time is the wedding?
- 2 Who is the best man, and what does he have to do?

Answers: 1 Dan (and Jo); 2 2 o'clock 2 Tim; he has to give a speech about Dan.

The future 1

Will

Will is the most common way to refer to future time.

- 1 We use *will / won't* + infinitive to make confident predictions about future events or situations.

This'll be interesting.

She won't say no! Not to a good-looking guy like you!

- 2 We use *will / won't* + infinitive for things we decide quickly at the moment of speaking.

I'll come round to your house at about 11.15, then.

- 3 We use *will / won't* + infinitive to make offers or promises.

I'll let you know as soon as it's ready.

▶ See Units 9 and 10 for other uses of *will*.

Be going to

- 4 We use *be going to* + infinitive for the future when there is present evidence that something is going to happen, when the event is already starting / starting very soon, and (particularly in informal style) for present plans / intentions for the future.

It looks like he's going to give his speech.

I'm going to ask her to marry me.

Present continuous

- 5 Use the present continuous to talk about already fixed plans / arrangements.

Are you giving a speech? (asking if this has already been arranged)

TIP

Use *will* or *be going to* + infinitive, not the present continuous, for predictions about events which are out of your control.

It'll take / 's going to take a couple of hours to get there.

NOT *It's taking ...*

Present simple

- 6 We usually use the present simple for known facts about the future or future events which are part of a fixed timetable.

The wedding is at 2.

What time does your train leave tomorrow?

Will or be going to

- 7 We can often use either *will* or *be going to* + infinitive for facts / predictions about the future.

Christmas Day will be / is going to be on a Friday next year.

- 8 We usually use *will* (or *won't*) + infinitive to say things about the future based on personal opinions / beliefs. We usually use *be going to* + infinitive to make predictions when there is clear outside evidence.

She'll have lots of children. (= I know she wants to have lots.)

She's going to have a baby. (= She's already pregnant.)

▶ See Unit 9 for *might*, *may* and *could* to indicate different levels of certainty when making predictions.

TIP

We often use *expect*, *hope*, *imagine*, *think*, *wonder if*, *be sure* and (in more informal situations) *bet*, *reckon* before *will* or *be going to* when we make predictions.

I hope it's going to be funny.

Will, be going to or present continuous

- 9 We can often use either *be going to* + infinitive or the present continuous, not *will*, for present plans / intentions / expectations for the future.

I can't meet you after work tonight. I'm going to see / I'm seeing a film with Kath. NOT *I'll see a film ...*

If we are only considering a plan and are still not sure, we sometimes use *will* after *I think*.

I think I'll leave about 11.30.

▶ See Unit 34 for more information on the use of present forms with future time reference.

TIP

With the verb *go*, we usually use the present continuous instead of *be going to go*.

Are you going to Dan's wedding? (instead of *Are you going to go ...?*)

- 10 After words like *when*, *after*, *before*, *as soon as*, *if*, *unless* and *until* we use the present simple (or the present perfect), not a future form, although we are talking about future time.

When you arrive home, you can tell me about your journey. NOT *When you will arrive ...*

Will, be going to, present continuous or present simple

- 11 We can sometimes use either *will*, *be going to*, the present continuous or the present simple with little or no difference in meaning. This is usually for official future events which we see as out of our control.

The new boss will start / is going to start / is starting / starts / tomorrow.

We usually use *will* in a more formal style, e.g. in invitations, public notices, etc.

The wedding reception will begin at 8.30.

