

Present tenses (**I am doing / I do**) for the futureA Present continuous (**I am doing**) with a future meaning

This is Ben's diary for next week.

He **is playing** tennis on Monday afternoon.

He **is going** to the dentist on Tuesday morning.

He **is having** dinner with Kate on Friday.

In all these examples, Ben has already decided and arranged to do these things.

I'm doing something (tomorrow) = I have already decided and arranged to do it:

- ☐ A: What **are you doing** on Saturday evening? (*not* What do you do)
- B: **I'm going** to the theatre. (*not* I go)
- ☐ A: What time **is** Katherine **arriving** tomorrow?
- B: Half past ten. **I'm meeting** her at the station.
- ☐ **I'm not working** tomorrow, so we can go out somewhere.
- ☐ Steve **isn't playing** football next Saturday. He's hurt his leg.

'**I'm going to (do)**' is also possible in these sentences:

- ☐ What **are you going to do** on Saturday evening?

But the present continuous is more natural when we talk about arrangements. See Unit 20B.

Do not use **will** to talk about what you have arranged to do:

- ☐ What **are you doing** this evening? (*not* What will you do)
- ☐ Alex **is getting** married next month. (*not* will get)

You can also use the present continuous for an action *just before you begin to do it*. This happens especially with verbs of movement (**go/come/leave** etc.):

- ☐ I'm tired. **I'm going** to bed now. Goodnight. (*not* I go to bed now)
- ☐ 'Jess, are you ready yet?' 'Yes, **I'm coming**.' (*not* I come)

B Present simple (**I do**) with a future meaning

We use the present simple when we talk about timetables, programmes etc. (for public transport, cinemas etc.):

- ☐ My train **leaves** at 11.30, so I need to be at the station by 11.15.
- ☐ What time **does** the film **start** this evening?
- ☐ It's Wednesday tomorrow. / Tomorrow **is** Wednesday.

You can use the present simple to talk about people if their plans are fixed like a timetable:

- ☐ I **start** my new job on Monday.
- ☐ What time **do** you **finish** work tomorrow?

But the continuous is more usual for personal arrangements:

- ☐ What time **are you meeting** Ann tomorrow? (*not* do you meet)

Compare:

Present continuous

- ☐ What time **are you arriving**?
- ☐ **I'm going** to the cinema this evening.

Present simple

- ☐ What time **does the train arrive**?
- ☐ **The film starts** at 8.15 (this evening).

Exercises

- 19.1** A friend of yours is planning to go on holiday soon. You ask her about her plans. Use the words in brackets to make your questions.



- 1 (where / go?) Where are you going?
- 2 (how long / go for?)
- 3 (when / leave?)
- 4 (go / alone?)
- 5 (travel / by car?)
- 6 (where / stay?)

Scotland.
Ten days.
Next Friday.
No, with a friend.
No, by train.
In a hotel.

- 19.2** Tom wants you to visit him, but you are very busy. Look at your diary for the next few days and explain to him why you can't come.



- TOM: Can you come on Monday evening?
YOU: Sorry, but I'm playing volleyball. (1)
TOM: What about Tuesday evening then?
YOU: No, not Tuesday. I (2)
TOM: And Wednesday evening?
YOU: (3)
TOM: Well, are you free on Thursday?
YOU: I'm afraid not. (4)

- 19.3** Have you arranged to do anything at these times? Write sentences about yourself.

- 1 (this evening) I'm going out this evening. or I'm not doing anything this evening.
- 2 (tomorrow morning) I
- 3 (tomorrow evening)
- 4 (next Sunday)
- 5 (choose another day or time)

- 19.4** Put the verb into the more suitable form, present continuous or present simple.

- 1 I'm going (I / go) to the cinema this evening.
- 2 Does the film start (the film / start) at 3.30 or 4.30?
- 3 (we / have) a party next Saturday. Would you like to come?
- 4 The art exhibition (finish) on 3 May.
- 5 (I / not / go) out this evening.
(I / stay) at home.
- 6 '..... (you / do) anything tomorrow morning?' 'No, I'm free. Why?'
- 7 (we / go) to a concert tonight.
(it / start) at 7.30.
- 8 (I / leave) now. I've come to say goodbye.
- 9 A: Have you seen Liz recently?
B: No, but (we / meet) for lunch next week.
- 10 *You are on the train to London and you ask another passenger:*
Excuse me. What time (this train / get) to London?
- 11 *You are talking to Helen:*
Helen, (I / go) to the supermarket. (you / come) with me?
- 12 *You and a friend are watching television. You say:*
I'm bored with this programme. What time (it / end)?
- 13 (I / not / use) the car this evening, so you can have it.
- 14 Sue (come) to see us tomorrow.
(she / travel) by train and her train (arrive) at 10.15.

(I'm) going to (do)

A

I am going to do something = I have already decided to do it, I intend to do it:

- ☐ 'Are you **going to eat** anything?' 'No, I'm not hungry.'
- ☐ A: I hear Sarah has won some money. What **is she going to do** with it?
B: She's **going to buy** a new car.
- ☐ I'm just **going to make** a quick phone call. Can you wait for me?
- ☐ This cheese smells horrible. I'm **not going to eat** it.

B

I am doing and I am going to do

We use **I am doing** (*present continuous*) when we say what we have *arranged* to do – for example, arranged to meet somebody, arranged to go somewhere:

- ☐ What time **are you meeting** Ann this evening?
- ☐ I'm **leaving** tomorrow. I've got my plane ticket.

I am going to do something = I've decided to do it (but perhaps not *arranged* to do it):

- ☐ 'Your shoes are dirty.' 'Yes, I know. I'm **going to clean** them.' (= I've decided to clean them, but I haven't *arranged* to clean them)
- ☐ I've decided not to stay here any longer. Tomorrow I'm **going to look** for somewhere else to stay.

Often the difference is very small and either form is possible.

C

You can also say that 'something **is going to happen**' in the future. For example:



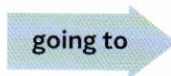
The man isn't looking where he is going.

He **is going to walk** into the wall.

When we say that 'something **is going to happen**', the situation *now* makes this clear. The man is walking towards the wall now, so we can see that he **is going to walk** into it.



situation now



future happening

Some more examples:

- ☐ Look at those black clouds! It's **going to rain**. (the clouds are there now)
- ☐ I feel terrible. I think I'm **going to be sick**. (I feel terrible now)
- ☐ The economic situation is bad now and things **are going to get** worse.

D

I was going to do something = I intended to do it, but didn't do it:

- ☐ We **were going to travel** by train, but then we decided to go by car instead.
- ☐ Peter **was going to do** the exam, but he changed his mind.
- ☐ I **was just going to cross** the road when somebody shouted 'Stop!'

You can say that 'something **was going to happen**' (but didn't happen):

- ☐ I thought it **was going to rain**, but it didn't.

20.1 Write a question with **going to** for each situation.

- 1 Your friend has won some money. You ask:
(what / do with it?) What are you going to do with it?
- 2 Your friend is going to a party tonight. You ask:
(what / wear?)
- 3 Your friend has just bought a new table. You ask:
(where / put it?)
- 4 Your friend has decided to have a party. You ask:
(who / invite?)

20.2 Read the situations and complete the dialogues. Use **going to**.

- 1 You have decided to clean your room this morning.
FRIEND: Are you going out this morning?
YOU: No, I'm going to clean my room.
- 2 You bought a sweater, but it doesn't fit you very well. You have decided to take it back to the shop.
FRIEND: That sweater is too big for you.
YOU: I know.
- 3 You have been offered a job, but you have decided not to accept it.
FRIEND: I hear you've been offered a job.
YOU: That's right, but
- 4 You have to phone Sarah. It's morning now, and you have decided to phone her tonight.
FRIEND: Have you phoned Sarah yet?
YOU: No,
- 5 You are in a restaurant. The food is awful and you've decided to complain.
FRIEND: This food is awful, isn't it?
YOU: Yes, it's disgusting.

20.3 What is going to happen in these situations? Use the words in brackets.

- 1 There are a lot of black clouds in the sky.
(rain) It's going to rain.
- 2 It is 8.30. Tom is leaving his house. He has to be at work at 8.45, but the journey takes 30 minutes.
(late) He
- 3 There is a hole in the bottom of the boat. A lot of water is coming in through the hole.
(sink) The boat
- 4 Lucy and Chris are driving. There is very little petrol left in the tank. The nearest petrol station is a long way away.
(run out) They

20.4 Complete the sentences with **was/were going to** + the following verbs:

buy give up phone play say ~~travel~~

- 1 We were going to travel by train, but then we decided to go by car instead.
- 2 I some new clothes yesterday, but I was very busy and didn't have time to go to the shops.
- 3 Oliver and I tennis last week, but he had to cancel because he'd hurt his knee.
- 4 I Jane, but I decided to email her instead.
- 5 A: When I last saw Tim, he his job.
B: That's right, but in the end he decided to stay where he was.
- 6 I'm sorry I interrupted you. What you ?

Will/shall 1

A We use **I'll** (= **I will**) when we've just decided to do something. When we say 'I'll do something', we announce our decision:

- ☐ Oh, I've left the door open. **I'll go** and shut it.
- ☐ 'What would you like to drink?' **I'll have** an orange juice, please.'
- ☐ 'Did you phone Lucy?' 'Oh no, I forgot. **I'll phone** her now.'

You cannot use the *present simple* (**I do / I go** etc.) in these sentences:

- ☐ **I'll go** and shut the door. (*not* I go and shut)

We often use **I think I'll ...** and **I don't think I'll ...**:

- ☐ I feel a bit hungry. **I think I'll have** something to eat.
- ☐ **I don't think I'll go** out tonight. I'm too tired.

In spoken English the negative of **will** is usually **won't** (= **will not**):

- ☐ I can see you're busy, so **I won't stay** long.

B Do *not* use **will** to talk about what you decided before (see Units 19–20):

- ☐ **I'm going** on holiday next Saturday. (*not* I'll go)
- ☐ **Are you working** tomorrow? (*not* Will you work)

C We often use **will** in these situations:

Offering to do something

- ☐ That bag looks heavy. **I'll help** you with it. (*not* I help)

Agreeing to do something

- ☐ A: Can you give Tim this book?
- ☐ B: Sure, **I'll give** it to him when I see him this afternoon.

Promising to do something

- ☐ Thanks for lending me the money. **I'll pay** you back on Friday.
- ☐ **I won't tell** anyone what happened. I promise.

Asking somebody to do something (Will you ... ?)

- ☐ **Will you** please turn the music down? I'm trying to concentrate.

You can use **won't** to say that somebody refuses to do something:

- ☐ I've tried to give her advice, but she **won't listen**.
- ☐ The car **won't start**. (= the car 'refuses' to start)



D **Shall I ... ? Shall we ... ?**

Shall is used mostly in the questions **shall I ... ? / shall we ... ?**

We use **shall I ... ? / shall we ... ?** to ask somebody's opinion (especially in offers or suggestions):

- ☐ **Shall I** open the window? (= Do you want me to open the window?)
- ☐ I've got no money. What **shall I** do? (= What do you suggest?)
- ☐ '**Shall we** go?' 'Just a minute. I'm not ready yet.'
- ☐ 'Where **shall we** have lunch?' 'Let's go to Marino's.'

Compare **shall I ... ?** and **will you ... ?**:

- ☐ **Shall I** shut the door? (= Do you want me to shut it?)
- ☐ **Will you** shut the door? (= I want you to shut it)

Exercises

21.1 Complete the sentences with I'll + a suitable verb.

- I'm too tired to walk home. I think I'll take a taxi.
- 'It's cold in this room.' 'Is it?' on the heating then.'
- 'Bye! Have a nice holiday!' 'Thanks. you a postcard.'
- 'Shall I do the washing-up?' 'No, it's all right. it later.'
- 'I don't know how to shut down this computer.' 'OK, you.'
- 'Would you like tea or coffee?' '..... coffee, please.'
- 'Are you coming with us?' 'No, I think here.'
- Thanks for lending me the money. it back as soon as possible, OK?
- A: I know you're busy, but can you finish this report this afternoon?
B: Well,, but I can't promise.

21.2 Read the situations and write sentences with I think I'll ... or I don't think I'll

- It's a bit cold. The window is open and you decide to close it. You say:
I think I'll close the window.
- You are feeling tired and it's getting late. You decide to go to bed. You say:
I think
- A friend of yours offers you a lift in his car, but you decide to walk. You say:
Thank you, but
- You were going to have lunch. Now you decide that you don't want to eat anything. You say:
I don't think
- You planned to go swimming. Now you decide that you don't want to go. You say:
.....

21.3 Which is correct? (If necessary, study Units 19–20 first.)

- 'Did you phone Lucy?' 'Oh no, I forgot. I phoned / I'll phone her now.' (I'll phone is correct)
- I can't meet you tomorrow. I'm playing / I'll play tennis. (I'm playing is correct)
- I meet / I'll meet you outside the hotel in half an hour, OK? 'Yes, that's fine.'
- 'I need some money.' 'OK, I'm lending / I'll lend you some. How much do you need?'
- I'm having / I'll have a party next Saturday. I hope you can come.
- 'Remember to get a newspaper when you go out.' 'OK, I don't forget / I won't forget.'
- What time does your train leave / will your train leave tomorrow?
- I asked Sue what happened, but she doesn't tell / won't tell me.
- 'Are you doing / Will you do anything tomorrow evening?' 'No, I'm free. Why?'
- I don't want to go out alone. Do you come / Will you come with me?

21.4 What do you say in these situations? Write sentences with shall I ... ? or shall we ... ?

- You and a friend want to do something this evening, but you don't know what.
You ask your friend: What shall we do this evening?
- You try on a jacket in a shop. You are not sure whether to buy it or not.
You ask a friend for advice: it?
- It's Helen's birthday next week. You want to give her a present, but you don't know what.
You ask a friend for advice:
What
- You and a friend are going on holiday together, but you have to decide where.
You ask him/her:
- You and a friend are going out. You have to decide whether to go by car or to walk.
You ask him/her: or
- Your friend wants you to come and see her. You don't know what time to come.
You ask her:

I will and I'm going to

A

Future actions

Study the difference between **will** and **(be) going to**:

Sarah is talking to Helen:

Let's have a party.

That's a great idea.
We'll **invite** lots of people.

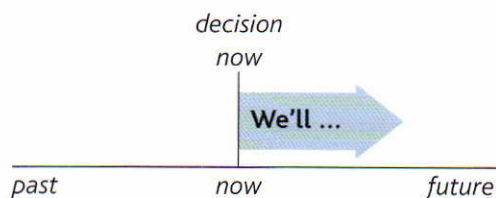


SARAH



HELEN

will ('ll): We use **will** to announce a new decision. The party is a new idea.



Later that day, Helen meets Dan:

Sarah and I have decided to have a party.
We're **going to invite** lots of people.

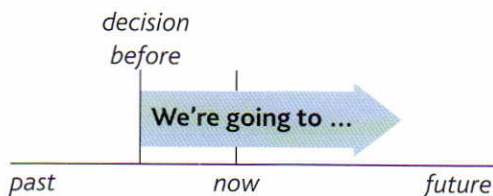


HELEN



DAN

(be) going to: We use **(be) going to** when we have *already decided* to do something. Helen had already decided to invite lots of people *before* she spoke to Dan.



Compare:

- ☐ 'Gary phoned while you were out.' 'OK. I'll **call** him back.'
- ☐ 'Gary **phoned** while you were out.' 'Yes, I know. I'm **going to call** him back.'
- ☐ 'Anna is in hospital.' 'Oh really? I didn't know. I'll **go** and visit her.'
- ☐ 'Anna is in hospital.' 'Yes, I know. I'm **going to visit** her this evening.'

B

Future happenings and situations (predicting the future)

We use both **will** and **going to** to predict future happenings and situations. So you can say:

- ☐ I think **the weather will be** nice later. *or*
I think **the weather is going to be** nice later.
- ☐ Those shoes are well-made. **They'll last** a long time. *or*
Those shoes are well-made. **They're going to last** a long time.

When we say something **is going to** happen, we know this from the situation *now*. What is happening *now* shows that something **is going to** happen in the future. For example:

- ☐ Look at those black clouds. **It's going to rain.** (*not* It will rain)
(We can see that it **is going to rain** from the clouds that are in the sky *now*.)
- ☐ I feel terrible. I think **I'm going to be sick.** (*not* I think I'll be sick)
(I think **I'm going to be sick** because I feel terrible *now*.)

Do not use **will** in this type of situation.

Exercises

23.1 Complete the sentences using **will ('ll)** or **going to**.

- A: Why are you turning on the TV?
B: I'm going to watch the news. (I / watch)
- A: Oh, I've just realised. I haven't got any money.
B: Haven't you? Well, don't worry. _____ you some. (I / lend)
- A: I've got a headache.
B: Have you? Wait a second and _____ an aspirin for you. (I / get)
- A: Why are you filling that bucket with water?
B: _____ the car. (I / wash)
- A: I've decided to repaint this room.
B: Oh, have you? What colour _____ it? (you / paint)
- A: Where are you going? Are you going shopping?
B: Yes, _____ some things for dinner. (I / buy)
- A: I don't know how to use the washing machine.
B: It's easy. _____ you. (I / show)
- A: What would you like to eat?
B: _____ a pizza, please. (I / have)
- A: Did you call Lisa?
B: Oh, no. I completely forgot. _____ her now. (I / call)
- A: Has Dan decided what to do when he leaves school?
B: Yes. Everything is planned. _____ a holiday for a few weeks.
(he / have) Then _____ a management training course. (he / do)

23.2 Read the situations and complete the sentences using **will ('ll)** or **going to**.

- The phone rings and you answer. Somebody wants to speak to John.
CALLER: Hello. Can I speak to John, please?
YOU: Just a moment. I'll get him. (I / get)
- It's a nice day, so you have decided to take a walk. Just before you go, you tell your friend.
YOU: The weather's too nice to stay in. _____ a walk. (I / take)
FRIEND: Good idea! I think _____ you. (I / join)
- Your friend is worried because she has lost her driving licence.
YOU: Don't worry. I'm sure _____ it. (you / find)
FRIEND: I hope so.
- There was a job advertised in the paper recently. At first you were interested, but then you decided not to apply.
FRIEND: Have you decided what to do about that job you were interested in?
YOU: Yes, _____ for it. (I / not / apply)
- You and a friend are stuck in traffic. You have to be in a meeting in five minutes and you need at least another 20 minutes to get there.
YOU: The meeting begins in five minutes. _____ . (we / be late)
- Ann and Sam are staying at a hotel. Their room is in very bad condition, especially the ceiling.
ANN: The ceiling doesn't look very safe, does it?
SAM: No, it looks as if _____ . (it / fall down)
- Paul has to go to the airport to catch a plane tomorrow morning.
PAUL: Kate, I need somebody to take me to the airport tomorrow morning.
KATE: That's no problem. _____ you. (I / take) What time is your flight?
PAUL: 10.30.
KATE: OK, _____ you up at your house at about 8 o'clock then. (I / pick)
Later that day, Joe offers to take Paul to the airport.
JOE: Paul, do you want me to take you to the airport?
PAUL: No thanks, Joe. _____ me. (Kate / take)