

# Talking about the Future



1. The Future Indefinite is formed by means of the auxiliary verbs *shall* and *will* and the infinitive without *to* of the notional verb.

In grammar books they generally say that *shall* is used for the first person singular and plural and *will* is used for the second and third persons singular and plural. However, in Modern English we can observe the tendency to use *will* for all persons in all the Future Tenses.

2. In the interrogative form the auxiliary verb is placed before the subject.

In the negative form the negative particle *not* is placed after the auxiliary verb.

### Affirmative

I shall (will) work  
He will work  
She will work  
We shall work  
You will work  
They will work

### Interrogative

Shall I work?  
Will he work?  
Will she work?  
Shall we work?  
Will you work?  
Will they work?

### Negative

I shall not work  
He will not work  
She will not work  
We shall not work  
You will not work  
They will not work

### 3. The contracted affirmative forms are:

I'll work  
You'll work

### The contracted negative forms are:

I shan't [ʃɑnt] work  
He won't [wəʊnt] work

### 4. The negative-interrogative forms are:

{ Shall we not work?	{ Will he not work?
{ Shan't we work?	{ Won't he work?

The Future Indefinite is used to denote a future action.

I am tired. I **shall go** and **have a nap** before dinner. (*Galsworthy*)  
It **will be** much cooler up at Fiesole. (*Voynich*)

The Future Indefinite is rendered in Russian by the future perfective and imperfective.

I **shall read** ten chapters to-morrow

Завтра я **прочту** десять глав.

I **shall read** the whole day to-morrow.

Завтра я **буду читать** целый день.

In general the Future Indefinite Tense is seldom used in Modern English. The tendency is to denote a future action either by means of the Present Continuous Tense (see page 89, § 9, 3) or, which is most common, by means of the Future Continuous Tense (see page 92, § 14, 2), or by means of the word combination *to be going* + Infinitive.

**The Present Continuous (I am doing)** is used when speaking about something that has been arranged to happen.

- ❑ A.: What **are** you **doing** tonight?  
B.: I'm **going** to the football match.
- ❑ A.: My sister **is leaving** tomorrow.  
B.: Oh, is she? What time **is** she **leaving**?
- ❑ A.: I'm **seeing** him tomorrow (= we've arranged to meet).

It is also possible to use *going to (do)* in these sentences (though *the Present Continuous* is preferable):

- ❑ What are you **going to do** tonight?

**The Present Simple (I do)** is used when talking about timetables, programmes, etc.

- ❑ What time **does** the lecture **begin**?
- ❑ The plane **takes off** at 4.30.
- ❑ Tomorrow **is** Christmas.

**Be going to (do)** is used:

1. when one says what one intends to do in the future.

- ❑ A.: **Are** you **going to watch** the ten o'clock news?  
B.: No, I'm too tired, I'm **going to have** an early night.
- ❑ I'm **going to see** this film (= I want to..., I intend to...).
- ❑ I **was going to phone** Eve but I came home too late.

2. when the speaker knows something is about to happen. Usually there is something in the present situation that makes the speaker sure about what will happen:

- ❑ Look at that little boy at the puddle. He **is going to fall** into it!
- ❑ The sky is overcast with black clouds. It's **going to rain**.

# EXERCISES



**1 (A, B) Write about your friend's plans for the coming summer vacation.**

**Model:** (Ben/go/Siberia/train) – *Ben is going to Siberia by train.*

1. (Lucy/stay/in the South of France/with her aunt) .....
2. (Roy/take/his younger brother/Canada/his parents) .....
3. (Letty/spend/a fortnight/Rome) .....
4. (Peter and John/hike/the Swiss mountains) .....
5. (Miranda/go/round the Greek islands/cruising boat) .....

**2 (A, B) Your relatives are preparing to leave for the country for the summer. Ask them about their arrangements.**

**Model:** (when/leave) *When are you leaving?*

1. (travel/by train?) – .....
2. (take/a lot of things?) – .....
3. (your pets/go/with you?) – .....
- ..... ? 4. (let/your flat/for the season?) – .....
- ..... ? 5. (rent/a car?) – .....

**3 (B, C) Put the verb into the Present Continuous or the Present Simple.**

**Model:** My daughter (leave) *is leaving* for Paris next Friday.  
(train/arrive) *Does your train arrive at 7.00 or 7.30?*

1. They (open) ..... a new exhibition next month.
2. I see you've packed all your things (you/go away) .....
3. The shops here (open) ..... at 7.00 and (close) ..... at 5.30.
4. The performances at our theatre (start) ..... at 7.30.
5. What time (the plane for Moscow/leave) ..... ?
6. Daddy, we (go/for a swim) ..... (you/come) ..... with us?
7. I hear, you (launch) ..... a new programme soon.

**4 (B, C) Translate into English.**

- A.: Давай пойдём в театр завтра.  
B.: Извини, мне бы очень хотелось, но я завтра работаю допоздна.  
A.: Тогда как насчёт среды?  
B.: Боюсь, я не могу. Я встречаю родителей в аэропорту.  
A.: Ну а что ты делаешь в субботу вечером?  
B.: Я играю в теннис в эту субботу.  
A.: Понятно. А в воскресенье вечером ты свободна?  
B.: В воскресенье у нас вечер встречи (reunion party) в школе.

# EXERCISES



## 5 (A, B) Say when you are going to do something.

**Models:** Have you watered the flowers? (in the morning)

*Not yet. I'm going to water them in the morning.*

Have you washed your hair? (just)

*Not yet. I'm just going to wash it.*

1. Have you spoken to the manager? (after lunch)  
Not yet. I .....
2. Have you made the tea? (just)  
Not yet. I .....
3. Have you bought a car? (soon)  
Not yet. I .....
4. Have you done your homework? (just)  
Not yet. I .....

## 6 (B) Write questions with *be going to*.

**Model:** I've found a little puppy in the park. (what/with it?)

*What are you going to do with it?*

1. It's unexpectedly hot today. (what/you/wear?)  
.....
2. Vlad has given me his latest painting. (where/you/hang it?)  
.....
3. I've decided to sell this house. (what/you/buy/instead?)  
.....

2. Did they visit the Tate Gallery?  
No, they ..... but they changed their mind.
3. Did he attend the meeting?  
No, he ..... but he changed his mind.

## 8 (B) You have to say what you think is going to happen in these situations.

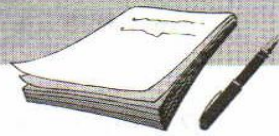
**Model:** Your friend has decided against going to the concert. (regret) – *She is going to regret it.*

1. You are my best friend. We've been friends for many years. Now you are going away. (miss)  
I .....
2. The children went to the woods all by themselves. They don't know the area well. (get lost) .....
3. There is a hole in Tom's jacket pocket. He's put some small change in it. (lose)  
.....
4. On the screen of your mobile phone there is a warning: "Low Battery". And your charger is nowhere to be found. ....  
..... (turn off).

## 9 (B, C) Translate into English.

1. Ты почистил машину? – Нет ещё. Я почищу её завтра.
2. Вы уже пообедали? – Нет ещё. Мы как раз собираемся обедать.
3. Небо такое голубое. Будет чудесный день.
4. Я решила устроить званый вечер. – Кого ты собираешься пригласить?
5. Твои друзья ездили в отпуск в Испанию? – Нет, они собирались, но передумали.
6. Экзамен завтра. Ты совсем не занимался. Ты провалишься.

# EXERCISES



**10 (B) Decide what to do or not to do in the following situations.**

**Model:** Letters travel too long (phone them). *I think we'll phone them.*  
It's too cold today (go skating). *I don't think we'll go skating.*

1. What a hot day! .....  
..... (for a swim)
2. You're too tired now. ....  
..... (homework/tomorrow)
3. You forgot to phone Ann. ....  
..... (now)
4. It's late evening. ....  
..... (coffee)
5. It's very hot in Africa in summer. ....  
..... (there/on holidays)
6. You have a lot of work to do. ....  
..... (to the cinema)
7. You like juice more than lemonade. ....  
..... (have juice)
8. It's windy outside. ....  
..... (for a walk)
9. You don't like travelling by train. ....  
..... (by car)
10. You feel sleepy. ....  
..... (TV tonight)

**11 (B) You do not want to babysit with your infant nephew instead of your mother.**

**Models:** Mother: Oh, I must clean the flat.  
You: *It's all right. I'll clean the flat.*

Mother: Oh, I must go to the cleaner's. ....  
You: It's all right. I .....  
Mother: Oh, I must buy food for the next week.  
You: .....  
Mother: Oh, I must wash the dog.  
You: .....

**12 (B) Agree and promise to do things.**

**Model:** A.: Can you type this letter?  
B.: *Sure. I'll type it after lunch.*  
A.: Do you promise to phone him?  
B.: *Yes, I promise. I'll phone him tonight.*

1. A.: Can you cook the dinner today?  
B.: Sure, ..... (in the afternoon)
2. A.: Do you promise to write to me?  
B.: Yes. .... (as soon as I get there)
3. A.: Can you wash my sweater?  
B.: All right, ..... (tomorrow)
4. A.: Please, don't break anything.  
B.: Don't worry. I ..... (anything)



## 1 WAYS OF REFERRING TO THE FUTURE

The following table summarises the different structures we use to talk about the future.

Form	Example	Meaning
<i>will</i>	<i>I'll just go and get my coat.</i>	= an immediate decision about what you are going to do
<i>will</i>	<i>You'll be sick if you eat more chocolate.</i>	= a general prediction
<i>be going to</i>	<i>I'm going to stop in a minute.</i>	= a personal intention
<i>be going to</i>	<i>Look out! We're going to hit the car in front.</i>	= a prediction after looking at what is happening now
<b>Present Continuous</b>	<i>We're going to the café. Won't you join us?</i>	= fixed plans / arrangements
<b>Present Simple</b>	<i>The coach leaves in ten minutes.</i>	= an unalterable arrangement or fact
<i>will + Continuous</i>	<i>Don't phone too early because I'll be putting the baby to bed.</i>	= an action that will be in progress some time in the future
<i>will + Continuous</i>	<i>We'll be working on this until the end of the year.</i>	= an activity that will be happening during a period in the future
<i>will + Continuous</i>	<i>I'll give your letter to him – I'll be seeing him later.</i>	= an action that will happen because it is regular or decided
<i>will + Perfect</i>	<i>We'll have driven over five hundred miles by the time we get there.</i>	= an event that will be finished before a specified time in the future
<i>will + Perfect Continuous</i>	<i>We'll have been living here for ten years next May.</i>	= a state of affairs in progress for a period up to a specified time in the future
<i>be + to-infinitive</i>	<i>He is to be given an award. You're to stay here until you've apologised.</i>	= an official arrangement or order

- We use *shall* with *I* or *we* with the same meaning as *will*. However, it is becoming increasingly formal – its most common current use is in polite offers or to ask advice (see Unit 3, Section 1.1):

*Shall I open the door for you? What shall we do now?*

## 2 WILL IN TIME CLAUSES AND IF-CLAUSES

We omit *will* in time clauses after *when*, *as soon as*, *until*, *before*, etc:

*I'm not going to speak to her until she's apologised.*

However, with conditional clauses (after *if*, *unless*, *providing*, etc.) we can use *will*, but only:

- when we want emphasis and *will* makes an intention or promise stronger:

*If you will insist on the best, then you must expect to pay more for it.*

- in polite requests – *will* means 'be willing to':

*If you'll hold these bags for me, I can open the door.*

- We use *would* instead of *will* in reported speech and conditionals:

*They promised they would work on it all weekend.*

*Harry asked me if I would help him out.*

## 3 COMMON PHRASES

*I'm (just) about to go out.* (= in a very short time)

*We were on the point of leaving when the bell rang.*

*We're due to meet in half an hour.*

**1** Tick (✓) the most appropriate of the underlined words.

- a She looks very pale. I think she'll / she's going to faint.
- b I'll / I'm going to do that for you, if you like.
- c I'll be / I'm going to be a rocket scientist when I grow up.
- d 'Somebody's at the door.' 'I'll / I'm going to see who it is.'
- e I need to be home early today so I leave / am leaving at 4.00.
- f We'll be in plenty of time providing the traffic is not / will not be too bad.
- g She asked if I would / will be so kind as to give her a lift.
- h What sort of job do you think you will do / will be doing in a few years time?
- i By the time you get back, all the food will have gone / will go.
- j The two Prime Ministers are to / shall discuss the current economic crisis.

**2** Fill each of the numbered gaps in this passage with one suitable word.



'Remember that by the terms of the contract you are due (1) to leave before midday,' the voice said.



'Yes. Yes, I know. I was ..... (2) about to pack when you rang.'



'Midday,' the voice repeated.



'I know. As I said, I was on the ..... (3) of leaving – packing, then leaving.'



'That is ..... (4) you want to pay for another week,' the voice continued.



'No. No, I'll ..... (5) out by twelve,' I stammered.



'It does say very clearly on your door that all guests are ..... (6) vacate their rooms by midday,' the voice went on, quite unnecessarily, I thought.



'Look. I've told you,' I shouted, 'I'll have ..... (7) before the clock strikes twelve! I'm ..... (8) in less than fifteen minutes. The flies, ants and cockroaches will soon ..... (9) partying in a punctually vacated apartment. Have no fear.'



'Kindly remember that the new occupants ..... (10) in at ...'



'I know! Midday!' I screamed, and threw down the phone.

## THE FUTURE INDEFINITE IN THE PAST

### § 7. The formation of the Future Indefinite in the Past.

1. The Future Indefinite in the Past is formed by means of the auxiliary verbs *should* and *would* and the infinitive without *to* of the notional verb.

*Should* is used for the first person singular and plural.

*Would* is used for the second and the third persons singular and plural. However, the tendency is to use *would* for all persons in all the Future Tenses in the Past.

2. In the interrogative form the auxiliary verb is placed before the subject.

In the negative form the negative particle *not* is placed after the auxiliary verb.

Affirmative	Interrogative	Negative
I should (would) work	Should I work?	I should not work
He (she) would work	Would he (she) work?	He (she) would not work
We should work	Should we work?	We should not work
You would work	Would you work?	You would not work
They would work	Would they work?	They would not work

3. The contracted affirmative and negative forms are:

I'd work	I shouldn't work
He'd work	He wouldn't work

4. The negative-interrogative forms are:

{ Should I not work?	{ Would he not work?
{ Shouldn't I work?	{ Wouldn't he work?

The Future Indefinite in the Past denotes an action which was future from the point of view of the past.

I was sure he would agree with me.