

SECTION 4

The future

1 WAYS OF REFERRING TO THE FUTURE

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

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

? check

Match the examples with the meanings in the table.

- a Are you going to the match tomorrow?
- b Are you going to go out this evening or not?
- c My driving licence expires in 2030.
- d I've had enough. I'll finish this tomorrow.
- e We'll be sending you more details in the post.

Practice

1 Tick (\checkmark) the most appropriate of the underlined words.

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

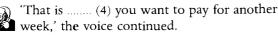
Fill each of the numbered gaps in this passage with one suitable word.

Remember that by the terms of the contract you are 0.92 (1) to leave before midday,' the voice said.

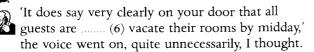
Yes. Yes, I know. I was (2) about to pack when you rang.

'Midday,' the voice repeated.

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



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



'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 α (10) in at ...'



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

3 Fill each of the gaps in the following sentences with a suitable word or phrase.

- *Example:* I was just about to have a cup of coffee when Sue called.
- a He was resigning when the news of his promotion came through.
- b Our builder told me he best to get the materials as soon as he could.
- c 1 think we'd better leave this restaurant as soon the bill.
- d If that little boy carries on like that, heaccident before long.
- By the time I qualify, I law for six years.
- f Our company is over by a multi-national.

4 A word is missing from most of the numbered pairs of lines in the passage. Mark the place with a line /, and write the missing word on the right. If a pair of lines does not need a word added, put a tick (\checkmark). The first two have been done for you.

| tic | k (V). The first two have been done for you | 1. |
|-----|---|-------|
| | Despite all the lessons we have learned from history, | 1 |
| | it is difficult to conceive what people are likely/be doing | to |
| 1 | a hundred years now. During this century, so many changes have | |
| 2 | taken place that any idea as to what new invention is about become | |
| 3 | an integral part of our lives has become more of a guessing game | |
| 4 | than ever. For a start, in ten years' time, today's | |
| 5 | innovations will probably have out of date. | |
| 6 | There little doubt that many of our habitual, taken-for-granted | |
| 7 | activities such as shopping and going to | ····· |
| 8 | school will disappeared by the year 2100, largely due to the growth | |
| 9 | of electronic media. But what we have little idea about is how this affect | |
| 10 | , | |
| 11 | we left this earth. What concerns us is how our great-great- | |
| 12 | grandchildren/be living. Will people still talking to each other face | |
| | to face, or only via computers? Will they still be able | |
| 14 | to find a friendly shoulder to cry on when they feeling low? In the | |
| 14 | long run, who knows? | |

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