

Negative questions

- 1 Negative questions can express various ideas.
Haven't you finished school yet? (surprise)
Don't you think we should wait for them? (suggestion)
Wouldn't it be better to go tomorrow? (persuasion)
Can't you see I'm busy? Go away! (criticism)
Isn't it a lovely day! (exclamation)
- 2 In the main use of negative questions, the speaker would normally expect a positive situation, but now expresses a negative situation. The speaker therefore is surprised.
Don't you like ice-cream? Everyone likes ice-cream!
Haven't you done your homework yet? What have you been doing?
- 3 Negative questions can also be used to mean *Confirm what I think is true*. In this use it refers to a positive situation.
Haven't I met you somewhere before? (I'm sure I have.)
Didn't we speak about this yesterday? (I'm sure we did.)
- 4 The difference between the two uses can be seen clearly if we change them into sentences with question tags.
You haven't done your homework yet, have you? (negative sentence, positive tag)
We've met before, haven't we? (positive sentence, negative tag)

UNIT 5

► Introduction to future forms

There is no one future tense in English. Instead, there are several verb forms that can refer to future time. Sometimes, several forms are possible to express a similar meaning, but not always.

will for prediction

- 1 The most common use of *will* is as an auxiliary verb to show future time. It expresses a future fact or prediction – *at some time in the future this event will happen*. This use is uncoloured by ideas such as intention, decision, arrangement, willingness, etc.
I'll be 30 in a few days' time.
It will be cold and wet tomorrow, I'm afraid.
Who do you think will win the match?
You'll feel better if you take this medicine.
I'll see you later.
This is the nearest English has to a neutral, pure future tense.
- 2 *Will* for a prediction can be based more on an opinion than a fact or evidence. It is often found with expressions such as *I think ... I hope ... I'm sure ...*
I think Labour will win the next election.
I hope you'll come and visit me.
I'm sure you'll pass your exams.
- 3 *Will* is common in the main clause when there is a subordinate clause with *if, when, before, etc.* Note that we don't use *will* in the subordinate clause.
You'll break the glass if you aren't careful.
When you're ready, we'll start the meeting.
I won't go until you arrive.
As soon as Peter comes, we'll have lunch.

going to for prediction

Going to can express a prediction based on a present fact. There is evidence now that something is sure to happen. We can see the future from the present.

Careful! That glass is going to fall over. Too late!
Look at that blue sky! It's going to be a lovely day.

Notes

- Sometimes there is little or no difference between *will* and *going to*.
We'll run out of money if we aren't careful.
We're going to
- We use *going to* when we have physical evidence to support our prediction.
She's going to have a baby. (Look at her bump.)
Liverpool are going to win. (It's 4–0, and there are only five minutes left.)
That glass is going to fall. (It's rolling to the edge of the table.)
- We can use *will* when there is no such outside evidence. Our prediction is based on our own personal opinion. It can be more theoretical and abstract.
I'm sure you'll have a good time at the wedding. (This is my opinion.)
I reckon Liverpool will win. (Said the day before the match.)
The glass will break if it falls. (This is what happens to glasses that fall.)
- Compare the sentences.
I bet John will be late home. The traffic is always bad at this time. (= my opinion)
John's going to be late home. He left a message on my voicemail. (= a fact)
Don't lend Keith your car. He'll crash it. (= a theoretical prediction)
Look out! We're going to crash! (= a prediction based on evidence)

Decisions and intentions – will and going to

- 1 *Will* is used to express a decision or intention made at the moment of speaking.
I'll phone you back in a minute.
Give me a ring some time. We'll go out together.
'The phone's ringing.' 'I'll get it.'
- 2 *Going to* is used to express a future plan, decision, or intention made before the moment of speaking.
When she grows up, she's going to be a ballet dancer.
We're going to get married in the spring.

Other uses of will and shall

- 1 *Will* as a prediction is an auxiliary verb that simply shows future time. The word itself has no real meaning.
Tomorrow will be cold and windy.
- 2 *Will* is also a modal auxiliary verb, and so it can express a variety of meanings. The meaning often depends on the meaning of the main verb.
I'll help you carry those bags. (= offer)
Will you marry me? (= willingness)
Will you open the window? (= request)
My car won't start. (= refusal)
I'll love you for ever. (= promise)
'The phone's ringing.' 'It'll be for me.' (= prediction about the present)
- 3 *Shall* is found mainly in questions. It is used with *I* and *we*.
Where shall I put your tea? (I'm asking for instructions.)
What shall we do tonight? (I'm asking for a decision.)
Shall I cook supper tonight? (I'm offering to help.)
Shall we eat out tonight? (I'm making a suggestion.)

Present Continuous for arrangements

- 1 The Present Continuous is used to express personal arrangements and fixed plans, especially when the time and place have been decided. A present tense is used because there is some reality in the present. The event is planned or decided, and we can see it coming. The event is usually in the near future.

I'm having lunch with Brian tomorrow.

What time are you meeting him?

Where are you having lunch?

What are you doing tonight?

- 2 The Present Continuous for future is often used with verbs of movement and activity.

Are you coming to the cinema tonight?

I'm meeting the director tomorrow.

We're playing tennis this afternoon.

- 3 The Present Continuous is used to refer to arrangements between people. It is not used to refer to events that people can't control.

*It's going to rain this afternoon. *It's raining this afternoon.*

*The sun rises at 5.30 tomorrow. *The sun is rising...*

Notes

- Sometimes there is little or no difference between the Present Continuous and *going to* to refer to the future.
We're seeing Hamlet at the theatre tonight.
We're going to see
- When there is a difference, the Present Continuous emphasizes an arrangement with some reality in the present; *going to* expresses a person's intentions.
I'm seeing my girlfriend tonight.
*I'm going to ask her to marry me. *I'm asking...*
What are you doing this weekend?
What are you going to do about the broken toilet? (= What have you decided to do?)

Present Simple for timetables

- 1 The Present Simple refers to a future event that is seen as unalterable because it is based on a timetable or calendar.

My flight leaves at 10.00.

Term starts on 4 April.

What time does the film start?

It's my birthday tomorrow.

- 2 It is used in subordinate clauses introduced by conjunctions such as *if*, *when*, *before*, *as soon as*, *unless*, etc.

We'll have a picnic if the weather stays fine.

When I get home, I'll cook the dinner.

I'll leave as soon as it stops raining.

Future Continuous

- 1 The Future Continuous expresses an activity that will be in progress before and after a time in the future.

Don't phone at 8.00. We'll be having supper.

This time tomorrow I'll be flying to New York.

- 2 The Future Continuous is used to refer to a future event that will happen in the natural course of events. This use is uncoloured by ideas such as intention, decision, arrangement, or willingness. As time goes by, this event will occur.

Don't worry about our guests. They'll be arriving any minute now.

We'll be going right back to the football after the break. (said on TV)

Future Perfect

The Future Perfect refers to an action that will be completed before a definite time in the future. It is not a very common verb form.

I'll have done all my work by this evening.