

A

Present simple

Reminder → B6 & B7

We can often use either the present simple or **will** to talk about future events that are part of some timetabled or programmed arrangement or routine. However, we prefer the present simple for fixed, unchangeable events. Compare:

- Does** the sale **finish** on Thursday or Friday? (or **Will** the sale **finish** ...?) and
- The sun **rises** at 5:16 tomorrow. (*more likely than* The sun will rise ...)

We avoid the present simple when we talk about less formal or less routine arrangements, or predictions. Instead we use **will**, **be going to**, or the present continuous:

- Are you staying** in to watch TV tonight, or **are you coming** dancing? (*not* Do you stay to watch TV tonight, or do you come...)
- It's only a problem in Britain now, but it **will affect** the rest of Europe soon. (*not* ... but it affects the rest of Europe soon.)

B

We use the present simple, not **will**, to refer to the future –

- ☆ in time clauses with conjunctions such as **after**, **as soon as**, **before**, **by the time**, **when**, **while**, **until**:
 - When you see* Ben, tell him he still owes me some money. (*not* When you will see Ben ...)
 - I should be finished *by the time you get* back. (*not* ... by the time you will get back.)
- ☆ in conditional clauses with **if**, **in case**, **provided**, and **unless**:
 - Provided* the right software **is** available, I should be able to solve the problem.
 - I'll bring some sandwiches *in case* we **don't find** anywhere decent to eat.
- ☆ when we talk about possible future events with **suppose**, **supposing**, and **what if** at the beginning of a sentence. Note that the past simple can be used with a similar meaning:
 - Suppose* we **miss** the bus – how will we get home? (or *Suppose* we **missed** ...)
 - What if* the train's late? Where shall I meet you then? (or *What if* the train **was** late?)

C

Present continuous

We can often use either the present continuous or **be going to** with a similar meaning to talk about planned future events. The present continuous indicates that we have a firm intention or have made a definite decision to do something, although this may not already be arranged:

- Are you seeing** the doctor again next week? (or **Are you going to see** ...?)
- I'm **not asking** Tom to the party. (or I'm **not going to ask** ...)

However, we don't use the present continuous for the future –

- ☆ when we make or report predictions about activities or events over which we have no control (we can't arrange these):
 - I think it's **going to rain** soon.
 - Scientists say that the satellite **won't cause** any damage when it falls to Earth.
- ☆ when we talk about permanent future situations:
 - People **are going to live** / **will live** longer in the future.
 - Her new house **is going to have** / **will have** three floors.

D

Many people avoid **be going to + go / come** and use the present continuous forms of **go** and **come** instead:

- I'm **going** to town on Saturday. (*rather than* I'm going to go to town ...)
- Are you coming** home for lunch? (*rather than* Are you going to come ...?)

Exercises

- 10.1** If possible, use the present simple of a verb from the box to complete each sentence. If not, use **will + infinitive**. **A-C**

accept change get give out go lend look after
miss play rain read start stop want

- We our exam results on the 20th August.
- Alex our cats while we're away next week.
- I think I'll take an umbrella in case it
- There is a reading list to accompany my lecture, which I at the end.
- The new drug on sale in the USA next year.
- The concert at 7:30, not 7:15 as it says in the programme.
- Provided it raining, we'll go for a walk this afternoon.
- What if I my plans and decide to stay longer? Will I need to renew my visa?
- We Mariam when she leaves, but she says she'll keep in touch.
- Unless my parents me some money, I won't be able to go on holiday this year.
- Tonight France Germany in a match important for both teams.
- It is unlikely that the government the court's decision.
- Supposing I to upload a video to YouTube? How do I do that?
- By the time you this letter, I should be in New Zealand.

- 10.2** Cross out any answers that are wrong or very unlikely. If two answers are possible, consider the difference in meaning, if any, between them. **C, D & Unit 9**

- It's not a deep cut, but it a scar.
a will leave b is going to leave c is leaving
- Did you know I a new car next week?
a will buy b am going to buy c am buying
- A: I'm not sure how I'll get to the concert. B: We can take you. We you up at eight.
a will pick b are going to pick c are picking
- I'm sorry I can't come for dinner. I to York tonight.
a will drive b am going to drive c am driving
- The high-speed rail link the journey time between the cities significantly.
a will cut b is going to cut c is cutting
- I have to go now. I you back later today.
a will call b am going to call c am calling
- Don't go out now. I lunch and it'll be cold by the time you get back.
a will serve b am going to serve c am serving
- Unless help arrives within the next few days, thousands
a will starve b are going to starve c are starving

- 10.3** Complete these dialogues with either present simple for the future or present continuous for the future using the verbs in brackets. If neither of these is correct, use **will** or **be going to**.

Units 9 & 10

- A: Simon Bianchi (1) (*join*) us for dinner. You know, the novelist.
B: Yes, I've read some of his books.
A: I'm sure you (2) (*like*) him. His latest book (3) (*come*) out at the end of this week. If you want, I'm sure he (4) (*give*) you a signed copy.
- A: Have you heard that BWM (1) (*sack*) 300 workers?
B: That's bad news. Supposing they (2) (*close*) completely – that would be awful.
A: But I've heard that they (3) (*build*) a new factory in Ireland. If you look on their website, you (4) (*see*) a lot of information about it.