

(I'm) going to (do)

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

- A: There's a movie on TV tonight. Are you going to watch it?
B: No, I'm going to write some letters.
- A: I heard that Lisa won some money. What is she going to do with it?
B: She's going to buy a new car.
- This cheese looks awful. I'm not going to eat it.

B I am doing and I am going to do

We normally 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 (see Unit 18A):

- What time are you meeting Amanda this evening?
- I'm leaving tomorrow. I have my plane ticket.

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

- "The windows are dirty." "Yes, I know. I'm going to wash them later." (= I've decided to wash them, but I haven't arranged to wash them)
- I've decided not to stay here any longer. Tomorrow I'm going to look for another place to live.

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 can't see the hole in front of him.
He is going to fall into the hole.

When we say that something is going to happen, the situation now makes us believe this. The man is walking toward the hole now, so he is going to fall into it.

situation now



going to →

future happening



- 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.)

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 drive instead.
- Peter was going to take the exam, but he changed his mind.
- I was just going to cross the street when somebody shouted, "Stop!"

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

- I thought it was going to rain, but then the sun came out.

Exercises

19.1 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?) _____

19.2 Read the situations and complete the dialogs. Use *going to*.

1. You have decided to write some letters this evening.
Friend: Are you going out this evening?
You: No, *I'm going to write some letters*
2. You're taking piano lessons, but you have decided to quit soon.
Friend: You don't seem to enjoy your piano lessons.
You: I don't.
3. You have been offered a job, but you have decided not to take it.
Friend: I hear you've been offered a job.
You: That's right, but _____
4. 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.
5. You have to call Sarah. It's morning now, and you intend to call her tonight.
Friend: Have you called Sarah yet?
You: No, _____

19.3 What is going to happen in these situations? Use the words in parentheses.

1. There are a lot of black clouds in the sky. (rain) *It's going to rain.*
2. It is 8:30. Jack is leaving his house. He has to be at work at 8:45, but the trip 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. Erica is driving. There is very little gas left in the tank. The nearest gas station is far away. (run out) She _____

19.4 Complete the sentences with *was/were going to* + one of these verbs:

call fly have play quit

1. We *were going to fly* _____ but we decided to drive instead.
2. We _____ tennis yesterday, but it rained all day.
3. I _____ John, but I decided to write him a letter instead.
4. When I last saw Bob, he _____ his job, but in the end he decided not to.
5. We _____ a party last week, but some of our friends couldn't come, so we changed our minds.