

FUTURE FORMS

- The first thing to understand is that English teachers generally hate teaching the “Future”. Therefore, do not be or get frustrated by it and use this simplified guide as best you can. The reason teachers often dislike teaching it is because:
 - of the overlaps of the various future forms (e.g. “will” and “going to” for predictions & “going to” and The Present Continuous Tense for plans).
 - You can, however, use combinations to decide which is best based on what your intention. E.g., if you see a child singing beautifully you could say either:
 - “That child will be famous someday” as a Prediction based on Opinion but also a Decision made now based on what you just saw.
 - “That child is going to be famous someday” as a Prediction based on Evidence only
 - there are often exceptions that are not easily explained and often just have to be accepted.
 - there are various different methods of teaching it and explaining it.
- There are several forms of the future concept as seen in the first column of the table. They include:
 - Plans for the future (general and more fixed arrangements). They overlap.
 - Predictions (based on evidence and on opinion). Again, they overlap.
 - Decisions made in the moment.
 - Offers to do something in the future: “shall” is often more appropriate than “will” in this case.
 - Promises for the future.
 - Facts for the future, making the future more “definite”. This is often (but not only) used for the indication of timetables or people arriving via transport.
 - I have included desires for the future. This however is not technically the future but more a current desire for the future.
- There are several ways to express the above future concepts shown in the first row of the table. These future forms include:
 - “will” (This is a modal verb and follows all the normal rules of modal verbs)
 - “shall” (This is a modal verb and follows all the normal rules of modal verbs)
 - “going to” – not to be confused with the present continuous form of “to go”.
 - The Present Continuous/Progressive Tense
 - The Present Simple Tense
 - “To want” – this form is not technically the future but more a current desire for the future.
 - “To would like” – this form is also not technically the future but more a current desire for the future.
- In addition to the above, although not covered in this document, there are also:
 - Modal and Semi-modal verbs that express future *Possibility (may, might, could)*, *Obligation (must, (will) have to)*, *Ability (can)*, *Necessity (need to)*, *Speculation (might)*, *Probability (should, ought to)*, etc.
 - The Future Continuous Tense & Future Perfect Tenses

FORM	“will”	“going to”	Present Cont. Tense	Present Simple Tense	“want” “would like”
Plans for the Future	n/a	General Plans (With an overlap with PCT) These can overlap as a plan can be (vague) general and (partly) specific at the same time (e.g. generally planned for a specific period time: early/January next year) e.g. I’m going to study English in Australia (sometime) next year.	Arrangements (With an overlap with “going to”) e.g. I’m working tonight. e.g. I’m meeting Juan at 3pm.	n/a	n/a
Predictions (this is where the main overlap and confusion arises with the Future)	Based on Opinion (With an overlap with “going to”) These can overlap as a prediction can be an opinion but also based somehow on previous evidence (e.g. you can predict someone will lose their phone, your opinion, but you also base this on the past evidence that they are always losing things) e.g. He’ll be sick after all that chocolate.	Based on Evidence (With an overlap with “will”) e.g. It’s going to rain.	n/a	n/a	n/a
Decisions made “now”	e.g. I’m thirsty. I’ll go and get a drink. I’ll be right back.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Offers (Usually in Question Form) *shall is often better in this case (Brit) but is not common in American English	e.g. Will/Shall I help you with your homework?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Promises	e.g. I’ll always love you.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Facts for the future/State (making the future more definite)	n/a	n/a	n/a	Not as common as in Spanish e.g. Mark’s on holidays next week.	n/a
Timetables (Particularly Transport)	n/a	n/a	n/a	e.g. My brother arrives tomorrow. His train gets in at 10pm.	n/a
People arriving (Particularly on Transport)	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a
Desires for the Future	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	More of a desire “now” for the future e.g. I would like (now) to study French next year.