

Simple Future Tense—Difference Between “Will” and “Going To”

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“Will” and “going to” are used to refer to the future. In formal writing, there’s one you should use over the other. We’ll tell you which one.



Will Future vs. Going-to Future

In formal writing, “will” and “going to” are used differently.

Correct Use

- In **casual speech and writing**, *will* and *going to* are often interchanged.
- However, it’s important to know that in formal writing, there is a **distinction**.
- *Will* is used when referring to the future with **certainty** and for **recent, rapid** decisions.
- *Going to* is used to refer to events that have been **previously planned**.

“Will” vs. “Going To”

In English, there are several forms that can be used to refer to the future. The two most common are *will* or *going to*. Often, especially in casual speech, these two words are used interchangeably with no issues. However, in formal writing, they have slight distinctions. If you want to be as accurate as possible, you should know that *will* is more commonly used with recent decisions, certain futures, and predictions. *Going to* tends to be used about events that were previously decided on.

If you're still not sure about when to use *will* or *going to*, don't worry. We promise we *will* elaborate on our explanations, and that you're *going to* understand them as soon as you're done reading this blog.

Simple Future Tense With “Will”

Simple future tense helps indicate that something will happen in the future. A future tense with *will* is used to state something with absolute certainty.

The structure for a future tense with *will* is: subject + *will* + base of a verb.

I will eat at Fuddruckers.

The structure of a negative future tense is: subject + *will* + not + base of a verb.

I will not join you for lunch today.

Remember, that *won't* is a contraction of *will not*.

I won't be going to tomorrow's office party.

Will is often used while making a rapid decision.

Sure, I'll (I will) get you a slice of pizza.

Simple Future Tense With “Going To”

When using a future tense, *going to* is used to reference an event that has already been planned.

*Last week, they decided they are **going to** get married in December.*

***Going to** is also used when there is evidence in the present that emphasizes something will happen.*

*You’re **going to** fall if you don’t tie your shoelaces.*

The structure of using *going to* in future tense is: subject + form of “to be” (am/is/are) + going to + base of a verb.

*I am **going to** travel to Ireland for vacation next month.*

*He is **going to** feel sad if you don’t invite him to the party.*

*They are **going to** go to his parents’ house.*

Please remember that in casual speech and writing, *will* and *going to* can be interchanged without changing the meaning of the sentence or causing any confusion. However, in formal writing it’s best to know the distinctions.

Correct

*This year, I **will** finish writing my book.*

Avoid

This year, I ~~am going to~~ finish writing my book.

Correct

*I think the Los Angeles Lakers **will not** win the NBA championship this season.*

Avoid

I think the Los Angeles Lakers ~~are not going to~~ win the NBA championship this season.

The Difference Between “Will” and “Going To”

Imagine if one of Queen’s hit songs, “We *will* rock you,” disregarded the difference between “will” and “going to.” We are *going to*, we are *going to* rock you” just wouldn’t have sounded as catchy, and the song probably wouldn’t have been quite as popular. Keep this in mind when you’re writing something formal, and deciding on whether to use “will” or “going to.”