

# Talking about the future

1. When we **know** about the **future** we normally use the **present tense**.

- We use the **present simple** for something **scheduled** or arranged:

**We have** a lesson next Monday.  
The **train arrives** at 6.30 in the morning.  
The **holidays start** next week.  
It **is my birthday** tomorrow.

- We can use the **present continuous** for **plans** or arrangements:

**I'm playing football** tomorrow.  
**They are coming** to see us tomorrow.  
**We're having** a party at Christmas.

2. We use **will** to talk about the future:

- When we make **predictions**:

**It will be** a nice day tomorrow.  
I think **Brazil will win** the World Cup.  
I'm sure **you will enjoy** the film.

- To mean **want** to or **be willing to**:

I hope **you will** come to my party.  
George says **he will help** us.

- To make offers and promises:

**I'll see** you tomorrow.  
**We'll send** you an email.

- To talk about **offers** and **promises**:

**Tim will be** at the meeting.  
**Mary will help** with the cooking.

3. We use **(be) going to**:

- To talk about **plans** and **intentions**:

**I'm going to drive** to work today.  
**They are going to move** to Manchester.

- When we can **see** that something is **likely to happen**:

Be careful! **You are going to fall**.  
Look at those black clouds. I think **it's going to rain**.

4. We often use verbs like **would like, plan, want, mean, hope, expect** to talk about the future:

What are you going to do next year? **I'd like to go** to University.  
**We plan to go** to France for our holidays.  
George **wants to buy** a new car.

5. We use **modals** *may*, *might*, and *could* when we are **not sure** about the future:

**I might stay** at home tonight, or **I might go** to the cinema.  
**We could see** Mary at the meeting. She sometimes goes.

6. We can use **should** if we think something is **likely to happen**:

**We should be** home in time for tea.  
**The game should be** over by eight o'clock.

7. Clauses with **time words**:

In clauses with time words like **when**, **after**, and **until** we often use a **present tense** form to talk about the future:

I'll come home **when I finish** work.  
You must wait here **until your father comes**.  
They are coming **after they have had** dinner.

8. Clauses with **if**:

In clauses with **if** we often use a **present tense** form to talk about the future:

We won't be able to go out **if it rains**.  
**If Barcelona win** tomorrow they will be champions.

**WARNING:** We do not normally use **will** in clauses with **if** or with **time words**:

I'll come home **when I will finish** work.  
We won't be able to go out **if it will rain** rains.

**But** we can use **will** if it means a promise or offer:

I will be very happy **if you will come** to my party.  
We should finish the job early **if George will help** us.

9. We can use the **future continuous** instead of the present continuous or going to **for emphasis** when we are talking about plans, arrangements and intentions:

**They'll be coming** to see us next week.  
**I will be driving** to work tomorrow.