

# Communicative English Language Skill II

## Lecture 7

### Grammar Focus: Future Tense

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# Welcome and Introduction

Hello, everyone. Welcome to Lecture 7 in the "Communicative English Language Skills II" series. Today we are exploring the grammar of the Future Tense. This lecture builds on the foundation from Skills I. Unit II of the module is titled 'Speculations about the Future of Science' and centres on the discovery by Dr. Aklilu Lemma of Haile Selassie University, who found that the endod plant (*Phytolacca dodecandra*) could serve as a natural molluscicide to combat bilharzia. The language of science—predictions, hypotheses, expected outcomes, and planned experiments—is deeply rooted in future-tense grammar.

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# Welcome and Introduction

- I have designed this session to be highly practical. We will focus not only on rules but also on how we communicate intentions. I will guide you through the four primary ways we talk about the future, starting with general predictions and moving toward specific plans and schedules. We will also use examples from your module, such as "Sara's Schedule."

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# Lesson Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Identify and use various future forms
- Differentiate between predictions based on opinion and those based on evidence.
- Express personal plans and fixed arrangements accurately.
- Talk about schedules and timetables using appropriate grammar.

# Warm-Up Discussion Questions

What are future tenses?

What different forms of future tense do you already know?

Can you write one sentence about your plans for next week?

Can you predict something about tomorrow's weather?

# Introduction: What Are Future Tenses?

Let's start with what you already know

These questions are not a test: they are a warm-up to activate your prior knowledge

Every time you say:

“I will do something” or “I am going to do something,” you are already using future forms!

Future tenses are grammatical structures used to describe actions, events, or states that have not yet happened.

English does not have a single future tense. Instead, it uses several structures, each expressing different intentions: → Planning | Promising | Predicting | Fixed schedules

Will, Be Going To, Present Continuous, and Simple Present.

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# Context

Alright everyone, before we dive into the grammar rules formally, I want you to read a short story first. This story comes straight from your course module Unit II, Activity 2.8. While you're reading, your task is to identify every future-tense form you see and note which structure is being used.

Go ahead and read it carefully — it's full of future tenses! You'll notice examples like will be, is going to visit, going to arrive, and will have her own bedroom, all different ways of talking about the future. Once we've studied the rules together, we'll come back to this same story, and you'll understand exactly why each form was chosen.

# The Mystery Guest: Reading Activity

Justin and Megan have a surprise for their two children, Sally and Timmy. They are going to have a special guest soon. "Can you guess who it will be?" Megan asks. Sally and Timmy take turns guessing. "Will Grandma visit us soon?" Timmy asks. Megan tells Timmy that Grandma is not going to visit soon. "Is Uncle Bill going to stay with us again?" Sally asks. Justin tells Sally that Uncle Bill is not going to stay with them again. Justin and Megan give their children another hint. "She is going to arrive in about 6 months," Megan says. "And she is going to stay with us for a very long time." "Where will she sleep?" Sally asks. Megan and Justin tell Sally that their special guest is going to sleep in their bedroom at first. Then, she will have her own bedroom. Sally and Timmy ask a few more questions, but they cannot guess who the special guest will be. "Who is going to visit us?" Sally and Timmy ask at the same time. "Well," Justin says, "you probably haven't noticed yet, but your Mother is pregnant! She is going to have a baby!" "You are going to have a new little sister in 6 months!" Megan exclaims. Timmy and Sally cannot believe what they hear! Sally is excited. She knows that she is going to be a good big sister. "I am going to have a sister!" Sally shouts. Timmy groans. "I wish I was going to have a brother," he says. Megan and Justin hug their children and laugh. They know that Sally and Timmy are going to love their new little sister! (Skills II, pp.27-28).

# The "Big Four" Future Forms

1. Will + Base Form: Predictions, spontaneous decisions.
2. Be Going To + Base Form: Intentions and plans.
3. Present Continuous (Be + -ing): Fixed arrangements.
4. Simple Present: Timetables and official schedules.

I want you to think of these four forms as tools in a toolbox. You choose the tool based on what you are trying to build. Are you making a wild guess about the weather? Are you talking about a flight that leaves at 8 PM? Or are you talking about your wedding next June? Each scenario requires a different form, and I am going to show you exactly which one to use.

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# Overview: The Four Future Forms

English uses four main grammatical structures to talk about the future. Each form carries a distinct communicative meaning. The table below provides a quick-reference overview

Form	Structure	Primary Use
Will (Simple Future)	will + base verb	Promises, instant decisions, opinion-based predictions, future facts
Be Going To	am/is/are + going to + base verb	Pre-planned intentions; predictions based on visible evidence
Present Progressive	am/is/are + verb-ing	Fixed, confirmed arrangements (usually with a specific person /time)
Simple Present	base verb (3rd person: +s)	Institutional timetables and fixed schedules

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# The Big Future...cont'd

Many students learn only 'will' and assume that is all English has for the future, but that is not the full story. Each of these four forms is used in different situations. Getting them right does not just mean knowing grammar: it means communicating the right meaning. Let's study each one in detail.

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# Rule 1: Using 'Will'

'Will' is one of the most frequently used future forms in English. It is a modal auxiliary verb followed by the base form of the main verb. We use 'will' for things we decide to do at the moment of speaking which is spontaneous Decisions

"Oh, the phone is ringing. I'll answer it!"

"I'm hungry." - "I will make you a sandwich."

Let's start with 'Will'. I often call this the "snap decision" form. I am speaking to you now, and if a fly enters the room, I might say, "I'll catch it!" I didn't plan to catch a fly this morning; I decided it right now. This is a key distinction from 'going to'.

## Structure

Form	Structure	Example
Positive	Subject + will + base verb	She will arrive tomorrow.
Negative	Subject + will not (won't) + base verb	He won't forget the appointment.
Question	Will + subject + base verb + ?	Will you come to the meeting?

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# Forming 'Will' - Uses

Positive: Subject + will + base verb (e.g., I will go).

Negative: Subject + will not (won't) + base verb (e.g., They won't come).

Question: Will + subject + base verb? (e.g., Will you help me?).

I am showing you the basic structure here. Note the contraction "won't." It's very common in spoken English. I want you to remember that the verb following 'will' is always in its base form—no '-ing', no '-ed', no '-s'. Simple and clean.

# Predictions with: 'Will'

We use 'will' for predictions based on what we think or believe.

- "I think Ethiopia will win the marathon."
- "It will probably rain tomorrow."
- "You will be a great doctor one day."

Now, let's talk about predictions. When I use 'will' for a prediction, I am expressing an opinion or a hope. I don't necessarily have physical proof; it's just what I feel in my heart or think in my head. I am using verbs like 'think', 'believe', or 'expect' often in these sentences.

# Rule 2: 'Be Going To'

We use 'be going to' for prior plans and intentions.

Example:

"I am going to visit my grandmother this weekend." (The decision was made before this moment.)

I am moving on to 'be going to'. This is different from 'will'. If I say "I am going to visit my grandmother," it means I have already thought about it. I have an intention. I am not deciding it right this second. It's a plan that already exists in my mind.

# Forming 'Be Going To' Structure

- Positive: Am/Is/Are + going to + base verb.
- Negative: Am/Is/Are + not + going to + base verb.
- Question: Am/Is/Are + subject + going to + base verb?

I am highlighting the verb 'to be' here because that's where most students make mistakes. You must match 'am', 'is', or 'are' with the subject. I am going, you are going, he is going. Don't forget the 'to' before the verb!

# Predictions with Evidence (Evidence Based)

Use 'be going to' when there is present evidence that something is about to happen.

"Look at those black clouds! It is going to rain."

"He's running so fast; he is going to win the race."

Look at the difference here. Earlier I said "It will rain" as an opinion. But now, I am looking out the window and seeing dark, heavy clouds. I have evidence. When I see the evidence with my own eyes, I use 'is going to'. I am observing the present to predict the immediate future.

# Will vs. Going To: The Battle

Feature	Will	Going To
Decision	Moment of speaking	Before speaking
Prediction	Opinion/Hope	Physical Evidence

*I am putting these side-by-side because this is the core of your Unit 2 grammar. Ask yourself: "Did I just think of this?" Use Will. "Did I plan this yesterday?" Use Going To. "Am I guessing?" Use Will. "Am I seeing it happen?" Use Going To.*

# Future with Present Continuous

- Used for fixed arrangements with other people or organizations.
- "I am meeting the Dean at 10 AM tomorrow."
- "We are flying to Addis Ababa on Tuesday."

I am now introducing the Present Continuous for future use. This is for things that are "more than a plan." It's an arrangement. If I have a ticket, or if it's in my diary and another person is involved, I use the '-ing' form. It feels very certain.

# Arrangement vs. Intention

Intention (Going to): "I'm going to get married one day." (A dream/plan).

Arrangement (Continuous): "I'm getting married on June 12th." (The hall is booked, guests are invited).

I want you to see the level of commitment here. 'Going to' is an intention: it's in your head. Present Continuous is an arrangement: it's in your calendar. If you say "I'm playing football at 5," it implies you've already called your friends and booked the pitch.

# Future with Simple Present

- Used for timetables, schedules, and fixed events (often public ones).
- "The train leaves at 6:00 PM."
- "The semester ends in June."
- "What time does the movie start?"

Finally, we have the Simple Present. I am talking about things we cannot change: things controlled by a clock or a calendar. Even though the train leaves in the future, we use the present tense because it is a permanent schedule.

# Identifying Timetables

Which sentence uses the Simple Present correctly for the future?

1. A) I eat dinner at 8 PM tonight.
2. B) The plane lands at 8 PM tonight.

I am testing you here. "I eat dinner" is a personal habit, but "The plane lands" is a scheduled public event. For personal plans, we prefer 'am eating' or 'am going to eat'. For the plane, we use the simple present 'lands'.

# Activity: "A Wonderful Plan"

Let's look at the dialogue in your module. Two friends are discussing a holiday.

"We are going to travel to the mountains. We are staying at the Blue Hotel. I think it will be amazing!"

I am directing your attention to the activity "A Wonderful Plan" from Unit 2. In this text, you see all these forms working together. They use 'going to' for their travel plan, 'staying' (Present Continuous) because they have a reservation, and 'will' for their prediction about the fun they'll have.

# Case Study: Sara's Schedule

Look at Sara's diary for next week:

Monday: Meeting with Boss (9 AM)

Wednesday: Dentist appointment (4 PM)

Friday: Flight to Nairobi (11 PM)

I am using Sara as our primary example for today. This diary is a goldmine for practicing future forms. Since these are all fixed appointments, we are going to use the Present Continuous to describe her week. Let's practice that on the next slide.

# Sara's Arrangements

- On Monday, she is meeting her boss at 9 AM.
- On Wednesday, she is seeing the dentist.
- On Friday, she is flying to Nairobi.

I am phrasing these as arrangements. Note how natural it sounds. We don't say "She will meet her boss" because that sounds like a prediction. We say "She is meeting" because it's a set appointment. This is the communicative way to speak.

# Quick Practice: Spontaneous Decisions

- Fill in the blank with 'Will':

1. "It's cold in here." - "I \_\_\_\_\_ (close) the window."

2. "I don't have money for the bus." - "Don't worry, I \_\_\_\_\_ (lend) you some."

I am asking you to complete these. The answers are "I'll close" and "I'll lend." These are decisions made right now to help someone or react to a situation. This is the most common use of 'will' in daily conversation.

# Quick Practice: Intentions

Use 'Be Going To':

1. Why are you carrying that paint? - "I \_\_\_\_\_ (paint) my bedroom."
2. What are your plans for summer? - ";We \_\_\_\_\_ (visit) our family in the countryside."

I am showing you how 'going to' connects a present action (carrying paint) to a future intention (painting). The answer for number one is "I am going to paint." For number two, "We are going to visit." The plan exists before the question was asked.

# Reviewing Predictions

- Opinion (Will): "I think you'll like this book."
- Evidence (Going to): "Watch out! You're going to drop those plates!" (They are wobbling in your hands).

I am emphasizing the "evidence" part again. If you see someone carrying ten plates and they are shaking, you don't say "You will drop them." You say "You are going to drop them!" because the event has already started to happen in the present.

# Common Future Time Expressions

- Tomorrow / Tomorrow morning
- Next week / Next month / Next year
- In two days / In the future
- This weekend / This evening
- Soon / Later

I am listing these expressions because they anchor your sentences in the future. Whether you use 'will' or 'going to', these phrases help the listener understand “when” the event occurs. I suggest you memorize the "in + time" structure, like "in three weeks."

# A Note on "Shall"

In modern English, 'Shall' is mostly used for suggestions or offers in question form with 'I' and 'We'.

- "Shall I open the door for you?" (Offer)
- "Shall we go to the cinema?" (Suggestion)

I am often asked about 'Shall'. In the past, it was used more like 'will', but today, I want you to use it primarily for making offers or suggestions. It sounds very polite and professional. "Shall we begin?" is a great way to start a meeting.

# Negative Future Forms

- "I won't (will not) be late."
- "I am not going to quit my job."
- "The bus doesn't leave until 9."
- "We aren't meeting today."

I am demonstrating the negative forms here. Pay attention to "won't." It's the most tricky one for spelling. Also, notice that with 'be going to' and 'Present Continuous', we just add 'not' after the 'be' verb.

# Asking About the Future

- "Will you help me with my homework?"
- "Are you going to study tonight?"
- "Is the meeting happening on Zoom?"
- "Does the shop open at 8?"

I am showing you how to ask questions. Remember, the auxiliary verb (Will, Am/Is/Are, Does) moves to the front. I want you to practice these because asking about someone's plans is a fundamental communicative skill.

# Mid-Lecture Checkpoint

Can you identify the error in this sentence?

- "I will meeting my friend at 5 PM."
- Correction: "I am meeting my friend at 5 PM" OR "I will meet my friend."

I am pausing here to check your understanding. Never mix 'will' with '-ing' in this way. It's either 'will' + base verb or 'am/is/are' + '-ing'. I am seeing this mistake quite often in written assignments, so let's be careful.

# Detailed Analysis: A Wonderful Plan

- In the module text, the speaker says: "We have booked the tickets."
- Because the tickets are booked, what is the best form to describe the travel?
- Answer: Present Continuous ("We are traveling...")

I am referring back to "A Wonderful Plan." Once tickets are booked, it is no longer just a "going to" intention. It has become a fixed arrangement. I am trying to show you that grammar changes as the situation becomes more certain.

# More on Simple Present Future

Common verbs used this way:

- Start / Finish
- Open / Close
- Leave / Arrive / Land
- Be (e.g., "Tomorrow is Tuesday")

I am highlighting these specific verbs. These are the "timetable verbs." If you are talking about an itinerary for a tour or a school schedule, I want you to use the simple present. It sounds professional and factual.

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# Sara's Monday

- Diary: 9:00 AM - Meeting with HR.
- Sentence: "At nine o'clock on Monday, Sara is having a meeting with HR."

Let's get specific with Sara. I am using the Present Continuous 'is having' because this meeting is a fixed point in her work schedule involving other people. I am teaching you to look at a schedule and turn it into spoken English.

# Sara's Friday Flight

- Diary: 11:00 PM - Flight to Nairobi (ET 302).
- Sentence: "Her flight leaves at 11:00 PM."

I am showing you a subtle shift here. I can say "Sara is flying to Nairobi" (Arrangement), but if I talk about the flight itself, I say "The flight leaves" (Timetable). Both are correct, but they focus on different things the person vs. the machine.

# Promises and Refusals

- We use 'will' for promises and 'won't' for refusals.
- "I will always love you." (Promise)
- "I won't tell anyone your secret." (Promise)
- "My car won't start!" (Refusal/Failure)

I am adding 'promises' to our 'will' category. When you make a commitment to someone, 'will' is the standard choice. Also, 'won't' can be used for things that "refuse" to work, like a car or a computer.

# Future Forms in a Job Interview

Interviewer: "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

Candidate: "I will hopefully be a senior manager. I am going to finish my Master's degree next year."

I am showing you how this works in a professional context. The candidate uses 'will' for a long-term hope (prediction) and 'going to' for a specific plan they have already started (the degree). This shows the interviewer you are organized.

# The Future Certainty Scale

1. Simple Present (100% - Timetables)
2. Present Continuous (90% - Arrangements)
3. Going To (70% - Intentions)
4. Will (50% - Predictions/Opinions)

I am giving you a "rule of thumb" here. The level of certainty usually dictates the grammar. If something is a law of nature or a public schedule, it's at the top. If it's just a thought you had, it's at the bottom with 'will'.

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# Spot the Evidence!

1. The score is 4-0 and there are 2 minutes left. They \_\_\_\_\_ (win).
2. I have a lot of work. I \_\_\_\_\_ (not/finish) on time.

I am asking you to choose the form. Since the score is 4-0, it is a certainty based on evidence. "They are going to win." For number two, it is also 'going to' because the 'lot of work' is the present evidence.

# "I think..." + Will

We rarely use "I think..." with 'going to'.

- Correct: "I think he will pass."
- Incorrect: "I think he is going to pass." (Less common)

I am pointing out a stylistic tip. 'Will' and 'think' are best friends. They almost always go together. If you start a sentence with "I think," your brain should automatically reach for 'will'.

# Don't Drop the "Be"!

Common mistake:

- Wrong: "I going to study."
- Correction: "I AM going to study."
- Wrong: "She meeting me later."
- Correction: "She IS meeting me later."

I am emphasizing this because it is the most frequent error I see. You cannot have 'going to' or '-ing' without the 'be' verb (am/is/are). I am asking you to double-check your sentences for these small words.

# Quick Reference

- Will: Instant reaction / Prediction (opinion).
- Going to: Plan / Prediction (evidence).
- Present Cont: Personal arrangements.
- Simple Present: Official timetables.

I am providing this as a summary slide. If you take a photo of only one slide today, make it this one. It covers about 80% of the future tense usage you will need for your exams and for daily life.

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# Questioning Sara

How do we ask about Sara's week?

- "What is Sara doing on Monday?"
- "When is she seeing the dentist?"
- "Is she leaving for Nairobi on Friday?"

I am showing you how to form questions about arrangements. We use the Present Continuous. "What are you doing this weekend?" is the most common way to ask a friend about their plans. Practice saying it with me: "What are you doing...?"

# Activity: Your Next 24 Hours

Think about your next 24 hours. Write 3 sentences:

1. One arrangement (Present Continuous).
2. One intention (Going to).
3. One prediction (Will).

I am giving you a moment to personalize this. For me, I am meeting a colleague for lunch (arrangement).

I am going to read a book tonight (intention). I think I will sleep well (prediction). Try it yourself!

# Future in Time Clauses

When talking about the future with when, as soon as, before, after, or if, we use the Simple Present for that part of the sentence.

- "I'll call you when I arrive." (NOT: when I will arrive).

I am introducing a slightly more advanced point here. In sentences with two parts, the part after 'when' or 'if' stays in the simple present, even if it refers to the future. This is a very common mistake in English proficiency exams.

In very casual conversation, "going to" often sounds like "gonna". "I'm gonna go now."

Note: Never write "gonna" in formal essays or exams!

I am mentioning this because you will hear it in movies and songs. I want you to recognize it, but I also want to warn you: do not use it in your written work for this course. Keep it for your informal chats with friends.

# Decision Tree

1. Is it a timetable? -> Simple Present
2. Is it a fixed appointment? -> Present Continuous
3. Is it a plan/evidence? -> Going To
4. Is it a snap decision/opinion? -> Will

I am giving you a mental checklist. When you are about to speak, run through these four questions. It will help you choose the correct grammar 99% of the time. This logic is what the module expects you to master.

# Closing

I am wrapping up for today. Thank you for your attention. Remember, the future isn't just one tense in English—it's a collection of ways to express how certain we are about what's coming. Keep practicing your future forms in daily conversation!

See you in the next lecture!

- For any question, please reach out to me:
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