

Chapter 4: FUTURE TIME

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General Notes on Chapter 4

- **OBJECTIVE:** The chapter emphasizes the common verb forms used to express future time (including present tenses) and briefly touches on the less frequently used future perfect, simple and progressive.
- **TERMINOLOGY:** Some grammarians maintain that English has only two tenses, past and non-past, which are indicated by having one-word verb forms for them (e.g., *went* for past and *go(es)* for non-past) and does not have a future tense because there is no one-word verb form with a future meaning. However, this text uses traditional terminology by calling ***will + simple form*** the simple future tense, and for ease of classroom communication calls ***be going to + simple form*** the simple future, too. The text defines the simple future as a verb form that expresses an event or situation that will, to the best of the speaker's knowledge, occur in future time. Using other modals and periphrastic (i.e., phrasal) modals to express future time is covered in Chapters 9 and 10.

CHART 4-1: SIMPLE FUTURE: WILL AND BE GOING TO

- This chart merely introduces the two basic forms for expressing the future. It does not show their differences in function or meaning. (See Chart 4-2.)
- Model *gonna* for the students. Don't rush them to use it in their speech; remind them that good enunciation is important to second language learners and that normal contracted speaking will occur naturally as they gain experience with the language. Point out that *gonna* is not used in writing.
- Some learners ask about *shall* vs. *will*. *Shall* is rarely used in American English to express future time. It is found more commonly in British English. It also occurs in some questions seeking agreement, e.g., *Shall we go now?* (See Chart 9-10.)

□ EXERCISE 1, p. 51. Simple future. (Chart 4-1)

Contraction of *will* is natural in conversation; this exercise gives students practice in hearing these forms and trying to produce them themselves. Most of the personal pronoun contractions are pronounced as a single syllable: *I'll* /ayl/, *you'll* /yul/, *he'll* /hiyl/, *she'll* /siyl/, *we'll* /wiyl/, *they'll* /ðeyl/. Other words add a syllable for the contraction: *it'll* /ɪtəl/, *that'll*, /ðætəl/, etc.

Items 1–4 show the commonly written contracted forms. In other items, the forms are not usually written but should be spoken in this exercise.

ANSWERS: 6. weather'll 7. Mary'll 8. Bill'll 9. children'll 10. Who'll
[This is sometimes a very informal written form also.] 11. Where'll 12. long'll
13. Nobody'll 14. That'll 15. What'll

CHART 4-2: WILL vs. BE GOING TO

- Students often want to know the difference between *will* and *be going to* even though in their own independent production most students rarely make the mistake of using one where the other is required.
- Define “prior plan” as a “preconceived notion” and explain what that means. Ask the students about their future plans to generate sentences that require *be going to* and are inappropriate for *will*. For example:
A: What are your plans for this evening?
B: I'm going to go to a movie with my friends this evening.
- For comparison, create a situation that requires *will* by asking for volunteers. For example:
A: It's warm in here. We need to open a window. Are there any volunteers?
B: I'll do it.

□ EXERCISE 2, p. 52. WILL vs. BE GOING TO. (Chart 4-2)

In the items, which are dialogues between Speaker A and Speaker B, students can work out the answers in pairs, then speak the dialogues in a natural manner (glancing only briefly at their texts). Discuss contracted forms with *will*.

PART I ANSWERS: [Note: There is no difference in meaning between *will* and *be going to* in these sentences.] 2. will be/is going to be . . . will come/is going to come 3. will probably see/am probably going to see 4. A: won't be/isn't going to be . . . Who will be/Who's going to be B: will teach/is going to teach . . . will be/am going to be 5. will the damage we do to our environment today affect/is the damage we do to our environment today going to affect

PART II ANSWERS: [Note: There is a difference in meaning between *will* and *be going to* in these sentences: *will* expresses willingness and *be going to* expresses a prior plan.] 8. B: will do C: will do 9. is going to erase 10. will meet 11. am going to meet 12. will get 13. am going to enroll . . . am going to take 14. will get 15. will go 16. am going to sell 17. will look

CHART 4-3: EXPRESSING THE FUTURE IN TIME CLAUSES

- The focus is on verb usage in complex sentences containing dependent (subordinate) adverb clauses, called “time clauses” here. The structure of sentences with these clauses is discussed more thoroughly in Chapters 5 and 17.
- Learners naturally feel that it is “logical” to use the future tense in the time clause as well as in the main clause. Point out that this is not “traditional” in English usage. There are certain patterns and systems within a language, but a language should not be expected to be logical.
- The meaning of *until* is sometimes difficult for learners to grasp, as in (e). It means that a situation will exist, then change.

□ EXERCISE 3, p. 55. Expressing the future in time clauses. (Chart 4-3)

ANSWERS: 2. [After the rain stops,] 3. [before my wife gets home from work today.] 4. [until Jessica comes.] 5. [As soon as the war is over,] 6. [when the tide comes in,] 7. [While I'm driving to work tomorrow,]

□ EXERCISE 4, p. 55. Expressing the future in time clauses. (Chart 4-3)

Keep attention focused on the time clause. Problems may occur because students try to use future tense instead of the simple present.

In items 7 and 8, the verbs “plan,” “hope,” and “intend” are used. These words refer to a present condition, a thought or feeling “at this moment” about a future activity. Therefore, they are in a present, not a future, tense form. Plans, hopes, and intentions occur in the present but concern future activities.

ANSWERS: 2. eat [*have eaten* is also correct, but try to keep the focus on the two choices in the directions: *will/be going to* or the simple present] . . . will probably take/am probably going to take 3. get . . . I'll call/am going to call 4. watch . . . will write/am going to write 5. will wait/am going to wait . . . comes 6. stops [also possible: *has stopped*] . . . will walk/am going to walk 7. graduate [also possible: *am graduated*] . . . intend [present tense because it is my plan now] . . . will go . . . get 8. am going to listen . . . sleep 9. A: are you staying/are you going to stay B: plan/am planning . . . hope/am hoping A: will you do/are you going to do . . . leave B: will return/am going to return . . . get A: will be/am going to be . . . return . . . get

□ **EXERCISE 5, p. 57. Expressing the future in time clauses. (Chart 4-3)**

Emphasize again the use of the simple present in a future time clause. Tense errors in future time clauses are common among second language learners of English.

VERB FORMS IN ANSWERS: 2. [simple present . . . future] 3. [future . . . simple present] 4. [future . . . simple present] 5. [simple present . . . future] 6. [future . . . simple present] 7. [simple present . . . future] 8. [(someone) . . . future]

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| CHART 4-4: USING THE PRESENT PROGRESSIVE AND THE SIMPLE PRESENT TO EXPRESS FUTURE TIME |
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- The present progressive, when used to express future time, must relate to a plan or intention.
- The simple present, when used to express future time, is limited to scheduled events.
- These tenses are frequently used to express future time, especially in conversational English. The difficulty for students is to learn the limitations on the use of the tenses to mean future time.

□ **EXERCISE 6, p. 57. Using the present progressive and the simple present to express future time. (Chart 4-4)**

See the *Introduction*, p. xix, for information about discussion-of-meaning exercises.

ANSWERS: 4. in the future 5. in the future 6. now 7. in the future 8. habitually 9. in the future 10. in the future 11. habitually 12. A: now B: now A: in the future [*do you want* asks about a present plan for a future activity.] 13. A: in the future B: in the future C: in the future 14. in the future 15. in the future 16. in the future 17. in the future 18. in the future

□ **EXERCISE 7, p. 59. Using the present progressive to express future time. (Chart 4-4)**

Note that *be going to* and sometimes *will* are also possible completions. The purpose of the exercise is to familiarize the learners with common situations in which the present progressive is used to express future time.

EXPECTED COMPLETIONS: 2. am taking 3. are having . . . are coming 4. am seeing 5. is going 6. are driving 7. is playing 8. am stopping

□ **EXERCISE 8, p. 60. Using the present progressive to express future time. (Chart 4-4)**

Students may be comfortable with *be going to* and produce it naturally. Encourage explicit practice with the use of the present progressive here.

□ **EXERCISE 9, p. 60. Using the present progressive and the simple present to express future time. (Chart 4-4)**

Explain what an itinerary is: a plan for a trip that shows the places to be visited, the route, the dates of arrival and departure, and sometimes the means of transportation.

As preparation for this writing assignment, perhaps photocopy and bring to class an itinerary from a travel agency for a future trip. Have the class describe the trip on that itinerary using present tenses.

CHART 4-5: FUTURE PROGRESSIVE

- Relate the examples to similar sentences with the present progressive and past progressive.
- In the exercises in the text, the future progressive is associated with an activity that will be in progress at a specific moment of future time. However, as in (d), the future progressive is also used to express predicted activities that will be in progress at a vague or nonspecific future time: e.g., *I'll be seeing you!* OR *I'll be waiting to hear from you* OR *Just wait. Before you know it, the baby will be walking and talking.*

□ EXERCISE 10, p. 60. Using the future progressive. (Chart 4-5)

ANSWERS: 1. will be attending 2. arrive . . . will be waiting 3. get . . . will be shining . . . will be singing . . . will still be lying 4. B: will be lying [Call attention to the spelling of *lying*.] A: will be thinking 5. will be staying 6. will be doing . . . will be attending school . . . (will be) studying [Point out the ellipsis (i.e., omission of the subject and auxiliary verb) in parallel structure.] 7. is . . . will probably be raining 8. will be in Chicago visiting 9. will be at the library working 10. will be living . . . will be driving

CHARTS 4-6 AND 4-7: FUTURE PERFECT AND FUTURE PERFECT PROGRESSIVE

- These are the two most infrequently used tenses in English. There's no need to belabor them.
- Relate these tenses to perfect simples and perfect progressives in the present and the past. Refer again to Chart 1-5 to show how these two tenses fit into a larger pattern.

□ EXERCISE 11, p. 62. Perfect and perfect progressive tenses. (Chapter 3; Charts 4-6 and 4-7)

This exercise includes past, present, and future perfect and progressive tenses. The text seeks to promote an understanding of the future perfect and future perfect progressive by comparing them to other tenses with which the students are more familiar.

ANSWERS: 1. have been . . . had been . . . will have been 2. get . . . will already have arrived / will have already arrived 3. got . . . had already arrived 4. have been sitting . . . had been sitting . . . will have been sitting 5. will have been driving [also possible: *will have driven*] 6. had been living / had lived . . . will have been living / will have lived 7. get . . . will have taken 8. will have been running 9. will have had . . . dies 10. will have been

□ **EXERCISE 12, p. 63. Review: future time. (Charts 4-1 → 4-7)**

Point out the parallels in the use of past and future verb forms. For example, in item 1, the sentences describe an activity in progress, first in the past, then in the future. The situation is progressive in both sentences; only the time is different. Perhaps refer once again to Chart 1-5 to point out the relationships among the tenses.

With an advanced class, you might do this exercise with books closed, with you reading the cue from the text about Bill's activities yesterday and asking the questions about tomorrow.

Suggest that the students use *will* (just for the sake of uniformity in the answers and to avoid having to give two possible answers for each item); forms of *be going to* are also possible and should of course be accepted.

The answers below don't give the contractions for *will*. It is hoped that contractions will occur naturally in at least some of the students' oral production.

ANSWERS: 2. He will shave and shower, and then make a light breakfast. 3. After he eats breakfast tomorrow, he will get ready to go to work. 4. By the time he gets to work tomorrow, he will have drunk three cups of coffee. 5. Between 8:00 and 9:00, Bill will answer his e-mail and (will) plan his day. 6. By 10:00 tomorrow, he will have called his new clients. 7. At 11:00 tomorrow, Bill will be attending a staff meeting. 8. He will go to lunch at noon and have a sandwich and a bowl of soup. 9. After he finishes eating, he will take a short walk in the park before he returns to the office. 10. He will work at his desk until he goes to another meeting in the middle of the afternoon. 11. By the time he leaves the office, he will have attended three meetings. 12. When Bill gets home, his children will be playing in the yard. 13. They will have been playing since 3:00 in the afternoon. 14. As soon as he finishes dinner, he will take the children for a walk to a nearby playground. 15. Afterward, the whole family will sit in the living room and discuss their day. 16. They will watch television for a while, then Bill and his wife will put the kids to bed. 17. By the time Bill goes to bed tomorrow, he will have had a full day and will be ready for sleep.

□ **EXERCISE 13, p. 64. Review: future time. (Chapter 4)**

Have the students brainstorm ideas about the future. If necessary, ask provocative leading questions. You may wish to have one student ask another a question about a given topic. You may wish to divide the students into groups and just let them talk, with no written or oral reports.

ALTERNATIVE: Divide the class into small groups. Assign one topic to each group, or allow them to choose a topic. Give them about 10 minutes to develop a presentation of their ideas. Then ask one person in each group to give the information to the class orally.

ALTERNATIVE: Assign one topic to each student and ask for an oral presentation of ideas. As a followup, students can write their paragraphs and hand them in to you.

In previous exercises, such as descriptions of pantomimes, you have stressed to the students the importance of being consistent in tense usage; e.g., if you begin to tell a story in the past tense, stay in the past tense and don't slip into the present. However, now point out that a paragraph of sentences on a single topic may require a mixing of past, present, and future.