

# Expressions for talking about the future



Let's go - the presentation's **about to begin**.

## Definition

These are expressions which can be used instead of the standard tenses to talk about the future.

## Construction and uses

### Expressions with 'be'

Construction	Use	Examples
'be' + infinitive	1. In news reports for likely events in the near future	The Government <b>is to announce</b> its plans for a new airport.
	2. To talk about formal arrangements	The management <b>are to introduce</b> new safety guidelines.
	3. To give formal instructions or orders	Employees <b>are not to leave</b> early without their manager's permission.
'be about' + infinitive	To talk about something in the very near future	I'm just <b>about to leave</b> ; can I call you back tomorrow?
'be due' + infinitive	To talk about something that's expected to happen at a certain time	The new desks are <b>due to arrive</b> on Friday.
'be bound' + infinitive	To talk about something we feel is certain to happen	There's <b>bound to be</b> a restaurant at the station; let's wait and eat there.

<b>'be set' + infinitive</b>	<b>To talk about something that's ready to happen</b>	<b>Despite the problems, they're set to launch next week as planned.</b>
<b>be sure/certain/likely /unlikely etc. + infinitive</b>	<b>To talk about varying levels of likelihood that something will happen</b>	<p><b>We're thinking about having a barbecue on Saturday but it's sure to rain.</b></p> <p><b>We're unlikely to find the right person for the job within the company.</b></p>
<b>be on the verge/brink/point of + noun or gerund</b>	<p><b>To talk about something that will happen very soon, often a new or different situation</b></p> <p><b>Note that 'be on the brink of' usually relates to something particularly significant.</b></p>	<p><b>We're on the point of restructuring the entire department.</b></p> <p><b>Peace talks broke down and the country is now on the brink of civil war.</b></p>

**Note that 'be' + infinitive:**

- is only used to talk about actions that can be controlled by people.**

The stolen items **are to be returned** to the museum this week. 

The stolen items **will be returned** to the museum this week. 

After a rainy spell, the warm weather **is to return** this weekend. 

After a rainy spell, the warm weather **will return** this weekend. 

- is often used in 'if' clauses but with a different meaning to 'if' + present tense. Compare:**

**If our company is to succeed in this competitive market, we'll have to invest more in new technology. ['If' + result + cause - future success depends on something else happening first]**

**If our company succeeds in this competitive market, we'll be able to continue expanding. ['If' + cause + result]**

## **Expressions with other verbs**

Construction	Use	Examples
Verb in present simple or present continuous + infinitive	To talk about intentions	We're <b>aiming to double</b> our turnover by the end of next year.
These are some common examples:  aim, expect, guarantee, hope, intend, mean, propose, want		Do you <b>guarantee to deliver</b> all the items on time?  She <b>expects to get</b> a reply soon.
'look' in present continuous + infinitive	To talk about a planned course of action	We're <b>looking to recruit</b> five more technicians in the next six months.  They're <b>looking to expand</b> into the Asian market.

## Examples



I think it's **about to rain** again.



Mark's **due to retire** in six months - that's why he's looking so happy these days!



I knew we should have reminded John - he **was bound to forget**!



I'm all **set to leave**, just waiting for the next coach.

See also **The future seen from the past**



From:  
<https://tools.e-exercices.com/> - Ressources pour les apprenants

Permanent link:  
[https://tools.e-exercices.com/doku.php?id=en:grammar:future:expressions\\_for\\_talking\\_about\\_the\\_future&rev=1486134946](https://tools.e-exercices.com/doku.php?id=en:grammar:future:expressions_for_talking_about_the_future&rev=1486134946)

Last update: 2023/02/14 14:21

