

Going to

Introduction



I'm **going to** buy a new laptop!

'**Going to**' is one of the ways to talk about the future. It is most commonly used to refer to general plans and intentions but can also be used for some predictions.

Note that 'going to' can be used to talk about any time in the future - near or distant:

I need to finish this report today so I'm **going to** start right now.

I'm **going to** sell my house and travel round the world!

Construction

Affirmative: subject + 'to be' + 'going to' + infinitive

I am **going to** resign.

Negative: subject + 'to be' + not + 'going to' + infinitive

I am not **going to** resign.

Interrogative: 'to be' + subject + 'going to' + infinitive

Are you **going to** resign?

Uses

Examples

To talk about future plans	<p>I'm not happy at work. I'm going to look for a new job.</p> <p>I'm going to wear my new red dress to the party.</p> <p>Are you going to have a meeting with them?</p>
To talk about intentions	<p>I'm going to work harder in the future.</p> <p>Are we going to celebrate her promotion?</p> <p>When I grow up, I'm going to be a train driver.</p>
Predictions based on visual evidence or something happening at the moment	<p>Look at those grey clouds. It's going to rain.</p> <p>He's driving too fast on this wet road. He's going to crash.</p> <p>Oh dear, she's so upset. She's going to cry.</p> <p>It's already 8 o'clock and we're not ready. We're going to miss the train!</p>

Note that for plans and intentions, these things may happen or they may not but at the time of speaking, the speaker believes they will. Intentions are often positive, constructive or beneficial in some way.

'Going to' or present continuous?

When using **going to**, we might mention a specific time but the focus is on an intention. If the focus is on our fixed plans and arrangements, we use the present continuous.

Compare:

"We still have a problem with the computers so we're **going to** discuss it at the next meeting." [talking about an intention]

"We still have a problem with the computers."

"Yes, I know but don't worry, we're discussing it at the meeting tomorrow." [talking about a fixed plan]

'Gonna'

In informal, spoken English, you will often hear 'going to' sounding like 'gonna' or 'g'na'. It is considered acceptable in everyday conversation but should be avoided in formal situations and in writing.

Have to

We sometimes use 'going to' before 'have to' in order to emphasise that we regret the necessity of an action:

I'm going to have to postpone the meeting until next week.

I'm sorry but I'm going to have to cancel our holiday.

Examples



It's my husband's 40th birthday soon so I'm **going to** give him a surprise party. I'm **not going to** tell him about it. I'm **going to** bake an enormous cake, order his favourite champagne and invite all his friends. I'm even **going to** look for some of his old school friends on Facebook!



I need to arrange a meeting with our German suppliers so I'm **going to** fix a date with them and book a flight to Hamburg. I'm **going to** try to negotiate a better deal with them for next year.



I'm **going to** see my friends tonight whether you let me or not!



What are you going to do when you graduate?



I'm going to open this one now - I can't wait until my birthday.



The ball's going to drop into the hole.



We're going to have a baby.



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Last update: **2023/02/14 14:32**