Shall

Introduction

I shall see that it gets done by next week - trust me.

Definition

Shall is a modal verb which is used for talking about the future. For other uses, see **modal verbs**.

Construction

This is rarely used and, apart from some special exceptions, it is only used with 'I' and 'we'.

Affirmative:	**subject + shall + verb**	**I/we shall go.**
Negative:	**subject + shall + not + verb**	**I/we shall not go.**
Interrogative:	**shall + subject + verb**	**Shall we go?**

Contracted form

In the affirmative and one form of the negative, this is the same as for will.

Affirmative   **I'll**   **We'll**

Negative form 1	**Negative form 2**
I'll not	**I shan't**
We'll not	**We shan't**

Use

Shall can be used as an alternative to 'will' when using future tenses.

> I **shall** do that tomorrow.
> We **shan't** be ready on time.
> In 15 years, I **shall** be retired and living by the sea.
> This time next week, we **shall** be sitting on the beach.
> If we don't work more quickly, we **shan't** have finished before the deadline.
> **Shall** we see you at the party?
> **Shan't** you be there?

Notes

1. This is rarely heard nowadays but some people prefer to use it some of the time. This includes occasions when we choose to be flippant or because we enjoy playing with the language. "What do you think will happen?" "I don't know - we **shall** see!"

2. It is sometimes considered a little stronger than **will** and is, therefore, more likely to be used when making promises or expressing determination.
"Don't worry, I **shall** do it tomorrow. I promise."

3. In conversation, **shan't** is more common than **shall not**. The latter is used for emphasis.
    "I **shall not** change my mind so don't ask me again."

4. In everyday use, **shall** is only used with 'I' and 'we'. However, in some older literature
you will find it with 'you', 'he', 'she', 'it' and 'they'.
    "You shall not pass!" says Gandalf in *Lord of the Rings*.

    Also, it may occasionally be heard in conversation with 'you', especially for emphatic use or when someone is angry.

    "You **shall** do your homework tonight"!   "You **shall** not speak to me like that again".

5. In formal written rules and **legal** language, **shall** can also be used with 'he', 'she', 'it' and 'they'. For example, FIFA's rules include:
    "The referee **shall** ensure an injured player is safely removed from the field of play."

6. The interrogative form is rare, possibly because it sounds like a suggestion rather than a prediction. Negative questions are, therefore, a little more likely to be heard.

    "**Shan't** we be seeing you at the meeting?"

7. **It is generally advisable for learners of English to avoid using shall as an alternative to will unless they feel very confident about when it is appropriate.**

Examples

We shall be there by 5 - looking forward to it.

I shall just ignore them.

I shan't be at the meeting tomorrow - I'll be too busy.

"Shan't we see you at the seminar next week?"   "No, I'll be on holiday."