

The future continuous

Introduction



Management **will be making** their decision in the next few days.

Definition

The future continuous is one of the tenses used to talk about the future.

Construction

affirmative: subject + 'will' + 'be' + present participle **I will be taking** a week off in July.

negative: subject + 'won't' + 'be' + present participle **I won't be taking** a week off in July.

interrogative: 'will' + subject + 'be' + present participle **Will you be taking** a week off in July?

Note that 'be going to' can also be used, although it is more rare than the 'will' form. For the difference in meanings see the normal rules for using '**will**' and '**going to**'.

I'm going to be taking a week off in July.

I'm not going to be taking a week off in July.

Are you going to be taking a week off in July?

Uses

Uses	Examples
When talking about something that will happen in relation to another action. You are telling someone what to expect. There might be a sense of reassuring.	I'll be waiting for you at the airport when your plane arrives.
When talking about a continuous action at a specific time in the future.	On Monday we'll be touring the Greek islands. This time next week I'll be lying on a beach.
Prediction where the focus is on the activity, rather than a completed action.	We'll all be driving electric cars in twenty years.
When talking about something that normally happens in the current circumstances. There might be a sense of reassuring.	We'll be flying at an altitude of 20,000 feet. A member of the cabin crew will be serving drinks shortly after take-off.
When talking about two actions that will be happening at the same time.	This evening I'll be working and he'll be cooking.

Adverbs

Adverbs such as 'always', 'only', 'never', 'ever', 'still', 'just' etc. are often used with the future continuous to add emphasis. The following examples show where to include these words:

**Do you think you'll still be doing the same job in five years?
If she's any later, we're still going to be waiting for her at lunch time.**

**I'll only be staying in Rome for one night so I won't have time to see much.
Looking at the schedule we're just going to be landing when James starts the meeting.**

Using the future continuous to talk about plans and

arrangements

It is often difficult to know which future tense to use, especially when the situation seems to be the same. Although your meaning will be clear whichever you use, asking these questions will help you to choose the most natural tense: Why is this event being talked about? What is the background context?

Future tense	Example	Context
Future simple	We'll have another meeting next week.	A spontaneous response. For example: "We didn't have time to discuss the sales figures today." "Oh, I see. Well, don't worry. <u>We'll have</u> another meeting next week."
Present simple	We have another meeting next week.	A simple statement of fact - it's in the diary or on a timetable. We might say this to remind someone of a date or to say why we are not free at a certain time. For example: "Remember we <u>have</u> another meeting next week. It's on Thursday and it <u>starts</u> at 9.00 sharp, so don't be late."
Going to	We're going to have another meeting (next week).	A general intention. The date is less important here. The focus is on the fact that you have considered something and decided what you intend to do. For example: "We didn't have time to discuss the sales figures today." "Yes, I know. Peter told me earlier. We talked about it and <u>we're going to have</u> another meeting."

Present continuous	We're having another meeting next week.	<p>The focus is personal plans and arrangements - what we are doing when. For example:</p> <p>"Next week is really busy. We're interviewing on Monday and Tuesday. On Wednesday, we're having another meeting to talk about the sales figures and on Thursday, Jeremy is coming over to tell us about his trip."</p>
Future continuous	We'll be having another meeting next week.	<p>There is a feeling that this is something that normally happens. We can expect to have this meeting. The speaker might even be reassuring the listener. For example:</p> <p>"So, as you all know, we didn't get time to talk about the sales figures today but we'll be having another meeting next week so we can add it to that agenda."</p>

Here are some more examples:

Context	Example
A teacher is talking to his class at the end of a lesson.	"Next week we're going to be discussing guidelines for your presentations so don't forget to bring what you've prepared so far."
A husband who always cooks dinner isn't feeling well today. He explains to his wife.	"Sorry, but I feel worse so I won't be cooking tonight; I'm going to have an early night. Why don't you pick up a takeaway?"
An employee has concerns about a team member. He talks to a senior colleague.	"I'm annoyed with Eric. I don't think he's working as hard as everyone else, but I don't feel it's up to me to say anything." "I know what you mean but I'll be seeing the boss later so I'll mention it to him and see what he says."
The second speaker wants to let someone know what to expect.	"My plane is delayed - I won't be there till after midnight." "Well I won't be waiting up for you, so see you in the morning!"

Notes

1. If you specify a time that an event starts or finishes, then use the present simple. The future continuous shows an event that starts before and finishes after the specified time. For example:

The football match starts at 3.00 and finishes at 4.45.

At 4.15 o'clock, the team **will be playing** football.

2. See also the rules for **stative verbs** that cannot be used in continuous tenses.

3. As with all future tenses, the future continuous is not used in clauses that start with time expressions such as 'when', 'if', 'after', 'before' and 'as soon as'. In this case use the present continuous in the time clause:

When I **will be working**, he **will be making** dinner. ❌

When I'm **working**, he'll **be making** dinner. ✓

Examples



Will you be going to the meeting this afternoon? I hear the new sales director will be there.



When **will you be coming** to see the new place?



I'm going to be eating at 1.00 so don't call me until later.



I'll be talking to John later; I'll pass on your message



We're going to be staying in Paris for most of the summer so come and see us if can.



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