

# 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  
July.

I **will be taking** a week off in

negative: subject + 'won't' + 'be' + present participle  
July.

I **won't be taking** a week off in

interrogative: 'will' + subject + 'be' + present participle  
in July?

**Will you be taking** a week off

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

## 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:<br>"We didn't have time to discuss the sales figures today."<br>"Oh, I see. Well, don't worry. We'll have 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:<br>"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:<br>"We didn't have time to discuss the sales figures today."<br>"Yes, I know. Peter told me earlier. We talked about it and we're <u>going to have</u> another meeting." |

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

Here are some more examples:

| Context  | Example  |
|--|--|
| A teacher is talking to his class at the end of a lesson.                            | "Next week we're <b>going to be discussing</b> 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 <b>won't be cooking</b> 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."<br>"I know what you mean but I'll <b>be seeing</b> 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 here till after midnight."<br>"Well I <b>won't be waiting up</b> 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. ✅

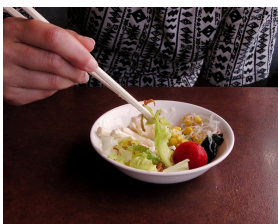
## Examples



**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.

## Construction

**affirmative:** subject + 'will' + 'be' + present participle  
July.

I **will be taking** a week off in

**negative:** subject + 'won't' + 'be' + present participle  
July.

I **won't be taking** a week off in

**interrogative:** 'will' + subject + 'be' + present participle  
in July?

**Will you be taking** a week off

## Uses

| Uses  | Examples  |
|---|---|
| Something that will happen at a time that is defined by another action. | <b>I'll be waiting</b> for you at the airport when your plane arrives.<br><br><b>Will you be seeing</b> John later? I need to give him a message. |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>A continuous action at a specific time in the future.</b></p>         | <p>On Monday we'll <b>be touring</b> the Greek islands.</p> <p>This time next week I'll <b>be lying</b> on a beach.</p>                              |
| <p><b>Prediction where the focus is on the activity.</b></p>                | <p>We'll all <b>be driving</b> electric cars in twenty years.</p>  |
| <p><b>Something that normally happens in the current circumstances.</b></p> | <p>We'll <b>be flying</b> at an altitude of 20,000 feet.</p> <p>A member of the cabin crew <b>will be serving</b> drinks shortly after take-off.</p> |
| <p><b>Two actions that will be happening at the same time.</b></p>          | <p>This evening I'll <b>be working</b> and he'll <b>be cooking</b>.</p>  |

## Notes

1. If you specify a time that an event starts or finishes, then use the present simple.

The football match **starts** at 3 and **finishes** at 5.

The future continuous shows an event that starts before and finishes after the specified time.

At 4 o'clock, the team **will be playing football**. (They started playing before 4 o'clock)

2. See also **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', '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 **am working**, he **will be making** dinner. ✅

## Using 'going to'

In the future continuous, 'be going to' can also be used. This is used more rarely than the 'will' form. For the difference in meanings see the normal rules for using 'will' and 'going to'.

### Construction

**affirmative:** subject + 'be going to' + 'be' + present participle

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

**negative:** subject + 'be' + 'not' + 'going to' + 'be' + present participle

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

**interrogative:** 'be' + subject + 'going to' + 'be' + present participle

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

| Examples   |
|--|
| <b>We are going to be staying in Paris on business. If you need to contact us, use my mobile number.</b> |
| <b>I am going to be eating lunch at 1 o'clock so don't call me until later.</b>                          |
| <b>She is going to be dancing and singing and playing the piano in the talent show.</b>                  |

## 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 stayng in Rome for one night so I won't have time to see all the sites.**

Looking at the schedule we're just **going to be landing** when James starts the meeting.

## Examples



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



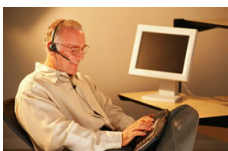
When **will you be coming** to see the new place?



Sue **is not going to be taking** the afternoon off after all. Her boss wants the report by the end of the day.



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



By the end of next year, more employees **will be working** from home.



During the tour, we'll **be visiting** the site and **discussing** the installation of the panels.



This time next week, we'll **be relaxing** on the beach while you'll still **be**

## working hard!



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