

# The present continuous and present simple for future events

## Introduction



I'm **meeting** some friends for lunch tomorrow.



bus **leaves** at 3:00.

The

## Definition

We can use the present continuous to talk about future arrangements.

The present simple for future events is sometimes called the timetable future. It is used to describe certainties in the future.

## Construction

**Affirmative:** subject + 'to be' + present participle weekend.

He **is visiting** his parents this weekend.

**Negative:** subject + 'to be' not + present participle this weekend.

He **isn't visiting** his parents this weekend.

**Interrogative:** 'to be' + subject + present participle weekend?

**Is he visiting** his parents this weekend?

**Note that** we usually mention a particular date or time.

**Affirmative:** Subject + **bare infinitive**

The train **leaves** at 10.35.

**Negative:** Subject + do + not + **bare infinitive**

The train **doesn't leave** at 10.35.

**Interrogative:** Do + subject + **bare infinitive**

**Does the train leave** at 10.35?

# Uses

## The present continuous:

| Uses                                     | Examples  |
|--|---|
| Social arrangements                      | <b>I'm meeting</b> Michel for a coffee after work.<br><b>We're having</b> dinner on Saturday and <b>going</b> to the theatre.   |
| Other arranged events/appointments       | <b>I'm seeing</b> my doctor tomorrow.<br><b>I'm having</b> my hair cut next week.   |
| Responding to suggestions or invitations | Are you free for lunch tomorrow?<br>No, sorry. <b>I'm playing</b> tennis in the morning and <b>going</b> shopping with my sister in the afternoon. How about next Saturday? |

**Note that** "What **are you doing** this weekend/tonight..?" is a useful expression for beginning a conversation. It can be either:

- an example of 'small talk' with someone we don't know very well
- an expression of genuine interest in someone's plans
- a subtle way to ask 'Are you free?' if you want to ask someone out.

## Present continuous or 'going to'?

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." [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." [a fixed plan]

## Present simple

| Uses | Examples |
|------|----------|
|------|----------|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Transport timetables</b></p>  | <p>The plane <b>takes off</b> at 6.30 on Wednesday morning.<br/>                 What time <b>does</b> your train <b>leave</b>?<br/>                 There <b>isn't</b> a bus from Paddington after 10 this evening.</p>                      |
| <p><b>Scheduled events</b></p>  | <p>The concert <b>starts</b> at 9.00 pm.<br/>                 We <b>have</b> an emergency staff meeting in one hour.<br/>                 Your next English meeting <b>is</b> on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April at 8.30. Is that OK for you?</p> |
| <p><b>Fixed, unchangeable events and plans</b></p>                                | <p>The sun <b>sets</b> two minutes earlier tomorrow.<br/>                 High tide <b>is</b> at 6 tomorrow.<br/>                 When do you <b>start</b> your new job?</p>  |
| <p><b>After words such as when, until , as soon as, if, after, and before</b></p> | <p>I will tell him as soon as he <b>arrives</b>.<br/>                 I'm staying inside until it <b>stops</b> raining.<br/>                 She will call us when she <b>is</b> ready.</p>   |

## Examples



You're **meeting** your new clients tomorrow, aren't you? Yes, I'm **picking** them up from the airport & **taking** them out to lunch.



Are you **seeing** George again this week?



Are you **doing** anything special this weekend?  
 No, just the usual. **Taking** the children to the park and **visiting** my parents.  
 What about you two?  
 We're **working** in the garden and on Sunday, we're **trying** that new Italian restaurant.



What **are you doing** tonight? Nothing much, **watching** TV, **relaxing**...



The match between Liverpool and Everton **kicks off** at 2:00 on Saturday.



The Air France flight to New York **leaves** Charles de Gaulle at 14:25.



According to the itinerary we **go out** to the island this afternoon, we **go** on a tour of the monastery and then **have** a drink before we **take** the boat back to the mainland.



The shop **opens** again at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

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