

Business English Bite Sized Revision - Planning and Predictions

A note about 'will': In relaxed English 'will' can be used for all forms of the future. I use will all the time. The distinctions below are for formal English.

Group 1: Possibilities and ideas about the future.

We use '**could**'/'**may**'/'**might**' to talk about ideas that are 50/50, that are not certain. Don't forget when you use modal verbs you always follow with the infinitive form (without 'to').

Example: We could go to the cinema if there is a good film showing.

Example: I might attend the conference, I am not sure.



Group 2: Making a decision in the moment.

We use '**will**' or '**won't**' to talk about a decision taken in the moment.

Example: Great idea! I will come to the cinema.

Example: I will speak to Mike about the conference.

Example: I won't attend the meeting, I have too much work.

Group 3: Plans.

3.1: We use '**going to**' to talk about intentions and precise plans. You can use '**going to**' when you have decided to do something but have not yet organised it (an intention). You can also use 'going to' to describe detailed plans with precise times.

Example: I have decided I am going to retake the French exam.

Example: I am going to meet Peter tomorrow at 9.00 am.

3.2: We use any other form of the **present continuous** (outside of 'going to') to talk about precise plans where you reference a particular time in the future.

Example: We are visiting Naples in May.

Example: I am meeting Peter tomorrow at 9.00 am.

3.3: We use the **present simple** to talk about official plans, for example, train timetables, flight information, office or factory schedules etc.

Example: The production team starts work at 7.00 pm.

Example: The flight departs at 7.30 am on 2 July 2017.

Example: The museum opens at 9.00 am tomorrow.

Group 4: Predictions.

Note: We use slightly different grammar forms to talk about predictions rather than a plan.

A prediction is often a feeling about your future, but you can also make predictions based on evidence.

4.1: We use '**will**'/'**won't**' to talk about confident predictions about the future.

Example: I will be married by the time I am 40!

Example: England will win the World Cup.

Example: I won't move back to London.

4.2: We use '**might**'/'**may**'/'**could**' to talk about predictions where we are not certain, it is 50/50.

Example: I might go to Portugal this summer, it depends on work.

Example: England could win the World Cup - they will need a lot of luck.

4.3: We use 'going to' to make strong predictions based on evidence.

Example: The clouds are dark I think it is going to rain.

Example: The profits were strong last quarter, I am sure profits are going to increase in Q2.

Prepositions of time

At – night/weekend in British English/exact time.

In – months/seasons/years/morning/evening/afternoon/period of time such as two years.

On – days, weekend in American English.