

## TALKING ABOUT THE FUTURE

Talking about the future means talking about things which haven't yet happened.

For this reason, how we express ourselves will depend on whether we are making a prediction, speculating about something, expressing an intention, expecting something to happen or perhaps making an arrangement.

We might say, 'I envisage starting my studies', 'There's a good chance that a cure might be found', 'It will probably happen in our lifetime' or '... that is going to affect the environment'.

The meaning of future in these examples is expressed using a variety of different forms, all of which are relevant to section 3 of the IELTS Speaking test.

This is where you will be required to use the language of **speculation, prediction** and **talk about the future**.

### STUDY TIPS

When talking about future events remember that choosing an appropriate form will depend on the meaning you want to express.

Is it speculation, predicting, making an arrangement, planning, showing intention, referring to a timetable or perhaps stating a probability?

Use a variety of these meanings in the third part of the IELTS Speaking test together, and a variety of different future forms.

## THE FUTURE

### FORMS

There are various different forms, which can be used to express future meaning in English. Here is a list of some of these forms.

#### 1. Verb tenses

##### Simple future: *will/shall*

I	}	+ infinitive
you		
he/she/it		
we		
they		

I **will** see him tomorrow.

**Present continuous**

am/is/are + present participle

John **is catching** the 10 o'clock flight tonight.

**Present continuous 'going to' form**

am/is/are + *going to* form + infinitive

I've made up my mind. I'm **going to finish** my studies next year.

**Future continuous**

will be + present participle

I'll **be working** on my assignment over the weekend.

**2. Verbs with future meaning**

*think, hope, promise, imagine, guess, suppose, expect, suspect*

I **hope** to be at the soccer match on Saturday.

**3. Modal verbs**

*may, might, would, could, will*

Manchester United **might win** the soccer match tomorrow.

**4. Conditionals**

If + ..... + will, may, might, could ...

If it **rains**, the tennis match **will** be cancelled.

**5. Adverbs qualifying future forms**

*perhaps, maybe, possibly, probably, definitely*

Interest rates **will probably** rise in the next quarter.

**6. Adjectives**

*likely, unlikely, possible, probable*

It is **likely** that it will rain later this evening.

## Expressing future meaning

Though there are various forms to use when talking about the future, deciding which to use will depend on the meaning to be conveyed.

The table below summarises a variety of events occurring in the future.

Future Events	Forms/Expressions	Examples
Predictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>will/shall</i> + infinitive</li> <li>▪ <i>going to</i> form</li> <li>▪ <i>future continuous</i></li> <li>▪ <i>adverbs</i> qualifying future forms: <i>perhaps, definitely, probably, maybe</i></li> <li>▪ expressions: <i>there's a good chance that..., I doubt very much if..., I hope that..., I expect that..., It's likely to...</i></li> <li>▪ conditionals</li> </ul>	<p>Your car <b>will</b> run smoothly after servicing. It's <b>going to be</b> cold tomorrow. I guess she <b>won't be attending</b> the wedding ceremony in America next month. It'll <b>probably</b> take two hours to get to the coast.</p> <p><b>There's a good chance that</b> the drought will break soon.</p> <p>If you invite him, he <b>might</b> come to the party. He is very shy.</p>
Arrangements/ Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>present continuous</i></li> <li>▪ <i>going to</i> form</li> <li>▪ <i>future continuous</i></li> <li>▪ expressions: <i>be due to, be about to</i></li> </ul>	<p>I'm <b>seeing</b> the specialist tomorrow. His new film <b>is opening</b> tonight. We're <b>going to</b> the Middle East for a holiday next month.</p> <p><b>Will you be staying</b> for dinner tonight?</p> <p>Jill <b>is due to</b> start her new job on Monday.</p>
Speculation/ Possibility/ Probability*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ modal verbs: <i>may, might, could, would, will</i></li> <li>▪ <i>conditionals</i></li> <li>▪ <i>adverbs</i> qualifying future forms: <i>perhaps, definitely, probably, maybe</i></li> <li>▪ verbs indicating our attitude: <i>think, expect, doubt, hope, suppose, promise, imagine</i></li> <li>▪ <i>be + (un)likely/certain + infinitive</i></li> </ul>	<p>You never know, she <b>might</b> pass the test at the end of term.</p> <p>If we went to Beijing, we <b>could</b> also visit the Great Wall of China. At this rate, we <b>definitely</b> won't get to school on time.</p> <p>I <b>expect</b> John will ring when he arrives in Shanghai later today.</p> <p>The fees for postgraduate studies are <b>likely</b> to be higher next year.</p>



# STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

Future Events	Forms/Expressions	Examples
Intentions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>going to form</li> <li>adverbs qualifying future forms: <i>perhaps, definitely, probably, maybe</i></li> <li>expressions: <i>be about to, be just about to, be on the point of +ing</i></li> </ul>	<p>James <b>is going to study</b> business at UTS.</p> <p>When <b>are you going to clean</b> your room?</p> <p>I'm <b>probably</b> going to sit the IELTS next month.</p> <p>I <b>was just about to</b> explain my predicament. May I continue?</p>
Timetabled events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>simple present</li> </ul>	<p>The autumn semester at UTS <b>starts</b> in March next year.</p> <p>My flight <b>leaves</b> at 6:30 am tomorrow morning.</p>
Offers/ Promises/ Requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will/shall</li> </ul>	<p>The tutor <b>will</b> help you with your assignment.</p> <p><b>Will</b> you have some more tea?</p> <p>I <b>shall</b> buy you his new CD.</p> <p><b>Will</b> you let me know about the tickets?</p>
Verbs with an implied future meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>decide, intend, swear, anticipate, envisage, predict, expect, guarantee, arrange, plan</i></li> </ul>	<p>Sandra has <b>decided</b> to buy a car.</p> <p>I <b>intend</b> to try out my new runners today.</p> <p>I <b>anticipate</b> problems with the new software.</p> <p>The company <b>arranges</b> the training for all employees.</p>
Future time clauses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>subordinate clauses with: <i>when, after, as soon as, once, until, before</i> + present tense</li> </ul>	<p><b>Once</b> the weather <b>warms</b> up, we'll go to the beach.</p>
Time references	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>tomorrow, in the future, in future, some day, sooner or later, one of these days, next</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Sooner or later</b> he'll invite you out.</p>

We can indicate the probability or possibility of a future event by degree.

High		100% will definitely
		80% will probably
		60% will possibly
		50% } will maybe will perhaps
		40% will possibly not
		20% will probably not
		0% will definitely not
Low		

There are other expressions, which can indicate probability/possibility of a future event.

High		I'm certain that...
		I'm confident that...
		I expect that...
		It's likely that...
		There's a good chance that...
		I think that...
		I hope that...
		I'm not confident that...
		I doubt that...
Low		