

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



STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

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