Hello. I'm Margot Politis. Welcome to Study English, IELTS preparation.

On Study English today, we'll talk about the language of speculation and take a look at identifying the future tense. Speculating about the future is a very important language skill for the IELTS speaking test.

But first, let's watch today's story. We'll visit a mangrove forest where we'll meet one of the more interesting animals that calls the forest home – the goanna, and a new animal – the cane toad – that might be threatening the mangrove goanna.

Possibly because it's very hard to get into the mangroves all year round, especially in the wet season when there's a lot of water. This site's one of the only spots where you can get in without a boat all year round so that's why we chose it.

Are cane toads likely to come into mangrove mud flats like this?

It's probable that they'll come in small numbers, but from radio tracking these goannas it looks like the mangrove goannas will head out onto the flood plain and they do seem to eat frogs so it's possible that when the cane toads arrive here on the flood plain in big numbers the goannas will eat them. So it's possible there'll be an impact.

We expect that most of the goannas are going to eat a cane toad and die, but we're just hoping that some of them, even a small proportion, won't be interested in eating a toad and they're the ones that will be living to pass on their genes and hopefully bring numbers of goannas back up, eventually.

So the scientists aren't sure what will happen in the future.

When we're trying to 'predict the future' – or speculate about what might happen - we have several language choices.

Let's put together a list of our options.

First, we have verbs. We could use verbs like:

'guess'

'suppose'

'imagine'

'think'

'suspect' or 'hope'

STUDY ENGLISH

Second, we can use 'modal verbs'.

For example:

'may'

'will'

'would'

'might' or

'could'.

Or, we can use 'conditionals' like 'if':

For example:

"If I pass the exam I will buy myself a new DVD."

Other conditionals use similar constructions like this:

'If… I might', or

'If … I could'.

We might also use 'discourse markers' to speculate about the future.

Some examples are:

'perhaps'

'maybe'

'hopefully'

'possibly'
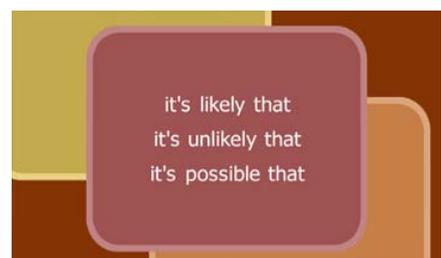
or even: 'you never know'.

And, finally, we can use 'adjectives'.

'It's likely that'

'it's unlikely that', or

'it's possible that'.

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So here's our list of choices:

We can talk about the future using:

'verbs'

'modal verbs'

'conditionals'

'discourse markers', or

'adjectives'.

Now, let's hear some of these in practice.

Listen to James Smith talking about what might happen to the cane toads and goannas.

It's probable that they'll come in small numbers, but from radio tracking these goannas it looks like the mangrove goannas will head out onto the flood plain and they do seem to eat frogs so it's possible that when the cane toads arrive here on the flood plain in big numbers the goannas will eat them. So it's possible there'll be an impact.

He says, 'it looks like' the mangrove goannas will head out.

When discussing the future, there are many verbs we can use. For example:

'it looks like',

'it seems',

'I expect',

'I hope',

'I imagine' or

'I suspect'.

These verbs are followed by future tense constructions.

In our example James says:

"It looks like the mangrove goannas will head out."

He uses the future tense, 'will', to say what the goannas will do in the future.

STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

Let's hear more from James:

We expect that most of the goannas are going to eat a cane toad and die, but we're just hoping that some of them, even a small proportion, won't be interested in eating a toad and they're the ones that will be living to pass on their genes and hopefully bring numbers of goannas back up, eventually.

James says:

"We expect that most of the goannas are going to eat a cane toad."

'Expect' is the verb.

And 'are going to eat' uses the future tense to predict what will happen.

James also uses discourse markers.

He says that if goannas don't eat toads then this will 'hopefully' bring numbers of goannas back up'.

Discourse markers like 'hopefully', 'maybe', 'possibly' or 'probably' can all be used to speculate about the future.

They can also give us an idea about what the speaker thinks. James hopes the goannas will survive.

The final item on our list was 'adjectives'. Listen to how James uses adjectives to speculate about the future.

It's probable that they'll come in small numbers, but from radio tracking these goannas it looks like the mangrove goannas will head out onto the flood plain and they do seem to eat frogs so it's possible that when the cane toads arrive here on the flood plain in big numbers the goannas will eat them. So it's possible there'll be an impact.

James says:

'It's probable', and

'It's possible'

STUDY ENGLISH

These are examples of using adjectives to show that the speaker is talking about something that 'might' happen in the future. James is speculating about things that 'might' happen.

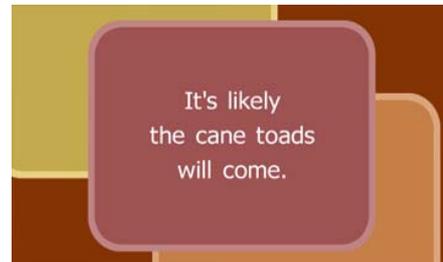In English, we can also say 'it's likely'.

So we can have:

"It's probable the cane toads will come."

"It's possible the cane toads will come."

or,

"It's likely the cane toads will come."

In each of these cases, we use the future tense - *will come*.

In English we have to decide which tense to use when referring to things that might happen in the future.

English uses three verb forms when referring to future actions – the 'simple future', the 'present continuous', and the 'future continuous'.

We can use the simple future – that's 'will' plus a 'verb' – *there will be.*

We can also use 2 forms of the present continuous - either the auxiliary verb 'to be' plus the 'present participle', or the auxiliary verb 'going to' with a 'main verb'.

Finally we can use the future continuous – 'will' plus the auxiliary verb 'to be' plus the present participle.

Listen for the future tenses in this clip

We expect that most of the goannas are going to eat a cane toad and die, but we're just hoping that some of them, even a small proportion, won't be interested in eating a toad and they're the ones that will be living to pass on their genes and hopefully bring numbers of goannas back up, eventually.

There were three examples in that clip.

'Are going to',

'Wont' be', and

'Will be',

Did you hear them? Listen again.

We expect that most of the goannas are going to eat a cane toad and die, but we're just hoping that some of them, even a small proportion, won't be interested in eating a toad and they're the ones that will be living to pass on their genes and hopefully bring numbers of goannas back up, eventually.

He says: some cane toads 'will be living' to pass on their genes.

'Will be living' uses the future continuous tense.

'He also says 'Are going to eat'. That uses the present continuous tense.

The present continuous tense is used to describe actions in the immediate future that are definite or planned.

A good example of the present continuous tense is:

"What are you doing tonight?"

"I'm going to see a film."

And that's all for study English today.

Let's take a look back at the things we've talked about.

First, we looked at the 'language of speculation' - the language you use to talk about things that might happen in the future.

We saw examples of
'Verbs'

'Modal verbs'

'Conditionals'

'Discourse markers', and 'Adjectives'.

Then, we looked at examples of 'future tenses' – the 'simple future tense', the 'present continuous tense' and the 'future continuous tense'.

And if sometime in the future, you need some help with your English – why not visit our Study English website. You <u>will probably</u> find everything you need.

And that's all for today. I'll see you next time for more Study English. Bye bye.