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General predictions

There are two ways we can make predictions about the future.

The [simple future](#) with **will** is one of the ways that we can make predictions. We can use this form to make almost any prediction about the future, whether we are talking about tomorrow or a hundred years from now.

We can also use the [future with going to](#) if we want to make general predictions about the future. Be sure to read to the end of this lesson to see the special predictions that we make with this tense.

Be sure to review the rules on the formation of the simple future and the future with **going to** [here](#) before reading the examples below.

Examples:

- **Correct:** Greta will arrive on time. She is always very punctual.

OR

Greta is going to arrive on time. She is always very punctual.

Incorrect: Greta **is arriving** today.

Remember that it is not correct to make predictions using the [present progressive](#).

We only use this tense when we are talking about [arrangements](#).



- **Correct:** They will win their match today!

OR

They are going to win their match today!

Incorrect: They **win** their match today!

Remember that it is not correct to make predictions using the [simple present](#).

We only use this tense when we are talking about [time tables or schedules](#).

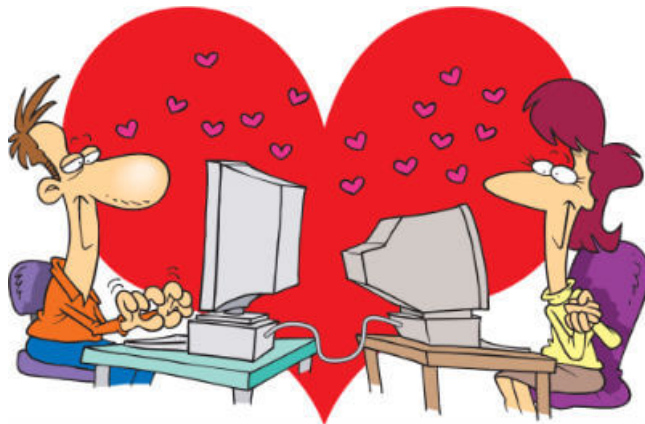


- **Correct:** I think they will have a lovely relationship. Maybe they will get married someday!

OR

I think they are going to have a lovely relationship. Maybe they are going to get married someday!

Incorrect: I think they **are having** a lovely relationship. Maybe they **are getting** married someday!

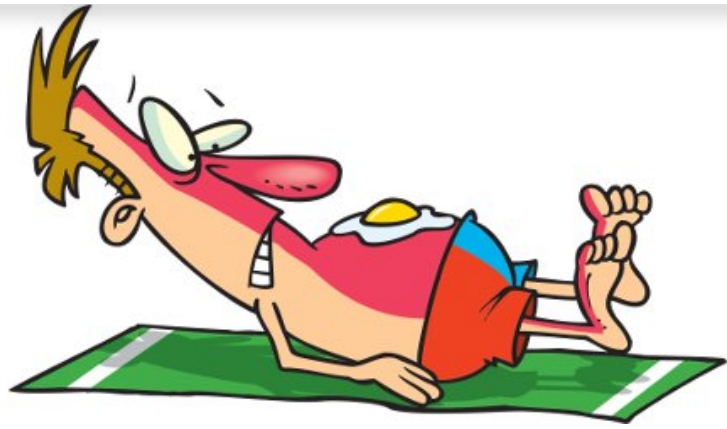


- **Correct:** Milton's doctor won't be happy when he sees that terrible sunburn! He will surely tell Milton that he needs to be more careful!

OR

Milton's doctor isn't going to be happy when he sees that terrible sunburn! He is surely going to tell Milton that he needs to be more careful!

Incorrect: Milton's doctor **isn't** happy when he sees that terrible sunburn! He surely **tells** Milton that he needs to be more careful!



- **Correct:** He won't have any trouble at his job interview today. He feels very confident!

OR

He isn't going to have any trouble at his job interview today. He feels very confident!

Incorrect: He **isn't having** any trouble at his job interview today. He feels very confident!



Predictions based on existing evidence

If we want to make a prediction based on a situation that we can see right now, we must use the future with **going to**.

For example, if you look at the sky and see big, dark clouds, you might predict rain.

Correct: Look! It is going to rain!

Incorrect: Look! It **will rain**!

When we are making predictions based on circumstances that we can see right now, we cannot use the simple future with **will**. We must use the future with **going to**.

Look at some more examples below. In all of them, the prediction is based on something we can see right now.

- Tim is going too fast on his bicycle! He is going to fall!



- Oh, my goodness! Frank is going to hit the man in the other boat!



- Mr. Newton is going to spill his coffee! Oh no, and he is going to drop his cake on the floor!



- He isn't going to eat that hamburger. It smells bad!



- He looks so tired! He isn't going to get up now.



These are the two ways we can make predictions about the future in English.

Remember that for general predictions we can use the simple future with **will** or the future with **going to**.

But, if we want to make a prediction based on current circumstances that we can see, we must use the future with **going to**.

That's all there is to it! Try making some examples of your own to help you remember how to make these predictions.

Practice with our [Predictions Worksheet and Answer Key](#).

[Return from Making Predictions about the Future to Using the Future Tense in English](#)

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