Section 3  talking about the future

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language notes

The differences between the structures used to talk about the future are complicated, and mostly not very important at this level. Note that many languages use a present form to talk about the future in cases where English doesn’t:

*We have a party this evening.
*I promise I never forget you.

Where English does use a present form to talk about the future, it is most often a present progressive (see page 27).

The ‘Pronunciation for grammar’ exercises for this Section will help students to understand and practise speech using contracted forms of going to and will.

possible further activities

There is no need for any activities based on the cartoons – they are simply provided as examples of the use of the will-future to predict. You may need to explain the fortune-teller cartoon: not all students will recognise the crystal ball or understand its significance.

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possible further activities

**Contractions** Write up or say full-form ‘going to’ sentences and get students saying them with contractions.

**Mime: future actions** Students take it in turns (individually or in groups) to mime things that they are going to do (not things that they are doing). The class try to guess what is being mimed. (‘You’re going to drive.’ ‘You’re going to swim.’ ‘You’re going to have breakfast.’ ‘You’re going to watch TV.’ …) If they have trouble thinking of ideas, you could give out cards telling them what to mime.

**Holidays** Students write or say some things that they are probably or certainly going to do on their next holiday.

**Gonna** Ask students to see how many song titles they can find on the internet containing “I’m gonna” or “you’re gonna”.

**Vocabulary expansion** Tell students to choose an imaginary future profession. Give them the names for any professions they don’t know, and list the words for the professions on the board as students tell you what they’re going to be. Then see how many of the choices students can remember and write down (‘Franco’s going to be a baker. Maria’s going to be a psychiatrist. …’).

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possible further activities

**Contractions** Write up or say full-form present progressive sentences (with future reference) and get students to say them with contractions.

**Plans** Students say what they are (not) doing this evening.

An asterisk (*) indicates an incorrect form or use.
Diaries  Students write diaries for themselves with entries (true or false) like those in the illustration to Exercise 1. They exchange them and report to the class on each other’s plans. (‘On Monday, Marco is having lunch with the President.’)

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language notes
First-person shall is becoming uncommon except in offers and questions about obligation. (‘Shall I carry something for you?’ ‘Shall we wait here?’). In other cases, I/we will is normal. The information in some older grammars about differences between will and shall is no longer accurate.

possible further activities
Contractions  Write up or say full-form sentences with I will / will not, you will / will not etc, and get students to say them with contractions.

Predictions  Students work in groups to predict news items for next week, using will + infinitive. (There will be … is a useful structure.) Help with vocabulary. Next week, check to see whether any of the predictions were accurate.

Hopes  Get students to write or say things that they hope for, for example:
– a new baby or young child in their family ('I hope that he/she will/won’t …')
– themselves ('I hope I'll be rich one day.')
– their country or the world

Horoscopes  Teach the names of the astrological star signs: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces. (Check the pronunciation in a dictionary if necessary.) Divide students into twelve groups. Each group writes next week’s horoscope for a different star sign. (‘Aries: On Monday you will …; Tuesday will be a difficult day …; on Wednesday …’) Save the horoscopes and check later – did anything at all come true?

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possible further activities

Electoral promises  Students prepare and make short political speeches containing promises, the more extravagant the better. (‘If you elect me I will …. Vote for me.’) Help with vocabulary. When everybody has finished, the class vote.

Mime: requests  Some students mime requests: those in Exercise 3 or others – you may want to write them on cards and give them out. The others say what is being mimed, beginning ‘Would you …?’ Possible requests:
Would you get me a drink / open a window / lock the door / wake me up at 8.00 / sweep the floor / clean the windows / lend me a pen / be quiet?

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language notes
The difference between going to and will in predictions is not very clear-cut. Often both are possible, depending on whether we are emphasising what we can see coming (going to) or what we know/think/believe (will). Both structures are common in weather forecasts and horoscopes.
possible further activities

*Problems and solutions* Tell the class that you have various problems; students must volunteer solutions. (‘I’m depressed.’ ‘I’ll/We’ll sing to you.’) Suggestions:
- I’m depressed. I’m hungry. I’m thirsty. My computer won’t start up.
- I need to write a letter in Spanish/Chinese/… My hair’s too long.
- My shoes are dirty. I need money. I haven’t got a tennis racket.
- I want to learn chess / bridge / the piano … I’ve lost my glasses.

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*Language notes*

Where English uses a present form to talk about the future, it is most often a present progressive. The simple present is only used in certain cases: those dealt with on this page, and in subordinate clauses after most conjunctions (see pages 241 and 254).

possible further activities

*Timings* Get students to find out about and list local opening and closing times and the starting times of plays, concerts etc. Who can find the most?

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possible further activities

*Personalisation: extending Exercise 1* Get students to write their own equivalent of Mr Collins’ timetable, referring to themselves.

*Mime* Students mime what they will be doing at a particular moment in the future. The others say what is being mimed (‘You’ll be …ing’).

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possible further activities

*Orders for the class* Students write out instructions for the class (‘Everybody is to …’; ‘You are all to …’; ‘Nobody is to …’). The class vote for the instruction they like best or dislike most/least.

*Internet* What instructions can students find on the internet beginning “All students/passengers/children are to”?

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*Language notes*

The differences between the various ‘future in the past’ constructions are not generally very important; they are parallel to the differences between the non-past equivalents (present progressive, *am/is/are going to*, *will, am/are/is to*).

possible further activities

*Personalisation: extending Exercise 2* More advanced students could write a short text about a similar situation in their own lives, using the appropriate structures.