

Will vs going to

CEFR A2-B1 · 20 questions · A4 / US Letter

The future has two shapes: will for decisions made now, going to for plans and visible evidence.

The rule

Will: decisions made now

- Form: will plus the base verb. I will call you. She will not wait. Will they come?
- Use will for a decision made at the moment of speaking: "The phone is ringing. I will get it."
- Use it for offers and promises: "I will help you", "I promise I will write."
- Use it for refusals: "The car will not start."
- The short form is usually written and spoken: I'll, you'll, she'll, we'll, they'll, won't.

Going to: plans and intentions

- Form: am, is or are plus going to plus the base verb. I am going to travel. They are not going to sell. Are you going to come?
- Use going to when the plan or intention already exists before you speak: "We are going to visit my parents on Sunday."
- The plan does not need to be fixed or booked. An intention counts: "I am going to learn Japanese."
- In speech, "going to" often becomes "gonna", but write the full form in essays and exams.

Predictions: opinion vs evidence

- Use will for a prediction based on opinion, knowledge or belief: "I think it will be a good film."
- Use going to for a prediction based on what you can see or hear now: "Look at those clouds. It is going to rain."
- Words like probably, maybe and I think go naturally with will: "It will probably be busy."
- Evidence words like look, smell, listen and watch out point to going to: "You are going to drop that glass."

Where both forms work

- For a general future fact, both forms are often fine: "The meeting will start at nine" and "The meeting is going to start at nine".
- Will is the safer choice for timetables and announcements: "The train will arrive at 8:15."
- Going to sounds more personal because it suggests a plan or a cause: "The train is going to be late — there is a signal problem."
- The real difference is not time. Both are future. The difference is why you say it.

Negative forms and questions

- Will negative: will not or won't plus the base verb. "She won't come."

- Going to negative: am, is or are plus not plus going to plus the base verb. "We are not going to wait."
- Will question: Will plus subject plus base verb. "Will you help me?"
- Going to question: am, is or are plus subject plus going to plus base verb. "Are you going to study tonight?"

Questions

Write your answer on the line under each question. Check your work with the answer key on the last page.

1. The phone is ringing. I ___ get it.

2. Look at those clouds! It ___ rain.

3. We have the tickets. We ___ see a show on Friday.

4. I think our team ___ win the match.

5. She has made her decision. She ___ study medicine.

6. Wait, I ___ help you with those bags.

7. Watch out! You ___ drop that glass.

8. I promise I ___ call you every day.

9. They ___ buy a house next year; they have started saving.

10. In 2050, cars ___ probably drive themselves.

11. He ___ arrive late; he just texted that he is stuck in traffic.

12. I forgot my wallet. — Do not worry, I ___ pay.

13. What ___ do after university?

14. The sky is very dark. It ___ snow tonight.

15. She ___ come to the party. She is working that evening.

16. We ___ get married in June. We booked the venue last month.

17. When I grow up, I ___ be an astronaut!

18. Do not worry about dinner. I ___ cook tonight.

19. I think the planet ___ get hotter in the next fifty years.

20. ___ you going to apply for the job?

Answer key

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1. **will** — This is a decision made at the moment of speaking, so will is correct.
2. **is going to** — The prediction comes from evidence you can see now, and evidence points to going to.
3. **are going to** — The plan already exists because the tickets are bought, so going to fits.
4. **will** — I think introduces a prediction based on opinion, and opinion predictions take will.
5. **is going to** — The decision already exists before she speaks about it, so going to is right.
6. **will** — An offer made in the moment of speaking takes will.
7. **are going to** — The prediction is based on what you can see right now, so use going to.
8. **will** — A promise is made at the moment of speaking, and promises take will.
9. **are going to** — Saving money shows the plan already exists, so going to is the natural choice.
10. **will** — This is a prediction about the distant future based on opinion, so will fits. Probably also goes naturally with will.
11. **is going to** — The evidence is already in hand: the text message. Evidence-based predictions take going to.
12. **will** — The offer is decided at the moment of speaking, so will is correct.
13. **are you going to** — The question asks about an existing plan or intention, so going to fits: are you going to.
14. **is going to** — The dark sky is visible evidence, and evidence-based predictions take going to.
15. **is not going to** — Her work schedule is a fact that makes the plan clear, so the negative uses going to.
16. **are going to** — The arrangement and the booking show a plan that already exists, so going to is correct.
17. **am going to** — This is a long-standing intention or plan, so going to is the natural choice.
18. **will** — The offer is made at the moment of speaking, so will is correct.
19. **will** — I think signals a prediction based on opinion, and opinion predictions take will.
20. **Are** — The going to question needs are before you: Are you going to apply?