

Presentation

a Form

The table below shows how to form the present simple tense of the verb **to work**. All verbs except *to be* and the modals (see Units 23–6) follow this pattern.

For negatives and questions we use the auxiliary **do** and the bare infinitive:

<i>I work</i>	<i>I do not/don't work</i>	<i>Do I work?</i>
<i>You work</i>	<i>You do not/don't work</i>	<i>Do you work?</i>
<i>He/she/it works</i>	<i>He/she/it does not/doesn't work</i>	<i>Does he/she/it work?</i>
<i>We work</i>	<i>We do not/don't work</i>	<i>Do we work?</i>
<i>They work</i>	<i>They do not/don't work</i>	<i>Do they work?</i>

Note: The short forms of the negative are commonly used in speech and informal writing.
Common mistakes:

1 Forgetting to put the **-s** ending on the *he/she/it* forms.

All verbs except modals must end in **-s** in the third person singular affirmative:

wrong: * *My new laptop work very well.*

right: *My new laptop works very well.*

2 Adding the **-s** to the *he/she/it* forms of negatives and questions.

We add the **-es** form to the auxiliary (*do*), and not to the main verb (*work*):

wrong: * *I know Karl doesn't works in Accounts.*

right: *I know Karl doesn't work in Accounts.*

b Permanent situations

The present simple is for actions and situations that are generally or permanently true:
IBM is one of the largest computer companies in the world; it manufactures mainframes and PCs, and sells its products all over the world.

c Routines and frequency

We use the present simple to talk about routines and things we do regularly:

I usually get to the showroom at about 8.00 and I have a quick look at my emails. The sales reps arrive at about 8.15 and we open at 8.30.

d Facts

We use the present simple to talk about scientific or other facts:

Superconductors are materials that conduct electricity and do not create electrical resistance.

e Programmes and timetables

We use the present simple to talk about programmes and timetables. When we use the present simple like this, it can refer to the future:

The fast train to London leaves at 7.39 and gets in to Paddington at 8.45. Then you catch the Heathrow Express to the airport – it goes every fifteen minutes.

2

Present continuous

Presentation

a Form

The present continuous is formed by using the present tense of the auxiliary **be** and the **-ing** form of the verb. For negatives and questions we also use the auxiliary **be** and the **-ing** form of the verb:

<i>I am/'m working</i>	<i>I am not/'m not working</i>	<i>Am I working?</i>
<i>You are/'re working</i>	<i>You are not/aren't working</i>	<i>Are you working?</i>
<i>He/she/it is/'s working</i>	<i>He/she/it is not/isn't working</i>	<i>Is he/she/it working?</i>
<i>We are/'re working</i>	<i>We are not/aren't working</i>	<i>Are we working?</i>
<i>They are/'re working</i>	<i>They are not/aren't working</i>	<i>Are they working?</i>

Note: The short forms of the positive and negative are commonly used in speech and informal writing. An alternative short form of the negative is also sometimes used: *you're not, he/she/it's not, we're not, they're not.*

For spelling rules, see Appendix 1, page 187.

b Moment of speaking

The present continuous is used to talk about an activity taking place at the moment of speaking:

*I'm afraid Herr Seifert isn't available at the moment. He **is talking** to a customer on the other phone.*

c Current projects

The present continuous is used to talk about actions or activities and current projects that are taking place over a period of time (even if they are not taking place precisely at the moment of speaking):

*Barton's is one of the largest local construction companies. At the moment we **are building** a new estate with 200 houses and we **are negotiating** with the council for the sale of development land in Boxley Wood.*

d Temporary situations

The present continuous is used to indicate that an action or activity is temporary rather than permanent. Compare:

*Janet **organizes** our conferences and book launches.*

(The present simple is used because this is generally true.)

*Janet is away on maternity leave, so I **am organizing** the conferences and book launches.*

(The present continuous is used because this is only true for a limited time.)

e Slow changes

The present continuous is used to describe current trends and slow changes that are taking place:

*The latest economic statistics from the European Central Bank show that both unemployment and inflation **are falling** in the Eurozone countries, and that the economy **is growing** at an annual rate of 2.6%.*

For information about how the present continuous is used to refer to the future, see Unit 13.

Present simple vs present continuous

Presentation

The following are examples comparing the present simple and present continuous:

a Routine vs moment of speaking

- 1 Henry **works** for PDQ, a business delivery company. Every day he **collects** and **delivers** packages for local companies.
- 2 The man in the post room **is packing** some parcels. Henry **is waiting** in reception.

In 1, we are talking about something that Henry does as a routine.

In 2, we are talking about something that they are doing at the moment of speaking.

b General activities vs current projects

- 1 I **work** for a firm of recruitment consultants. We **design** psychometric tests.
- 2 At the moment we're **working** on new tests for the personnel department of a large oil company.

In 1, we are talking about a general activity.

In 2, we are talking about a specific current project.

c Permanent vs temporary situations

- 1 Peter **deals** with enquiries about our car fleet sales.
- 2 I **am dealing** with enquiries about fleet sales while Peter is away on holiday.

In 1, this is permanently true.

In 2, this is a temporary situation.

d Facts vs slow changes

- 1 As a rule, cheap imports **lead** to greater competition.
- 2 Cheap imports **are leading** to the closure of a number of inefficient factories.

In 1, we are making a statement about a general fact that is always true.

In 2, we are talking about a change that is taking place at the moment.

e Stative verbs

There are a number of verbs which describe states rather than actions. They are not normally used in the continuous form. Common examples are:

Verbs of thinking: **believe, doubt, guess, imagine, know, realize, suppose, understand**

Verbs of the senses: **hear, smell, sound, taste, see**

Verbs of possession: **belong to, have (meaning: possess), own, possess**

Verbs of emotion: **dislike, hate, like, love, prefer, regret, want, wish**

Verbs of appearance: **appear, seem**

Others: **contain, depend on, include, involve, mean, measure, weigh, require**

These are usually found in the simple form because they do not refer to actions:
I'm sorry, I **don't understand** what you mean.

We do not say: * I'm **not understanding** what you mean.

4

Past simple

Presentation

a Form

The past simple (positive) is formed by using the past tense form. Regular verbs add **-d** or **-ed** to the bare infinitive to form the past tense. For negatives and questions we use the auxiliary **did** and the bare infinitive:

<i>I worked</i>	<i>I did not/didn't work</i>	<i>Did I work?</i>
<i>You worked</i>	<i>You did not/didn't work</i>	<i>Did you work?</i>
<i>He/she/it worked</i>	<i>He/she/it did not/didn't work</i>	<i>Did he/she/it work?</i>
<i>We worked</i>	<i>We did not/didn't work</i>	<i>Did we work?</i>
<i>They worked</i>	<i>They did not/didn't work</i>	<i>Did they work?</i>

Note: The short form of the negative is commonly used in speech and informal writing.

Common mistakes:

Using the past tense form in negatives and in questions.

wrong: **Did you checked the figures? No, I didn't checked them.*

right: *Did you check the figures? No, I didn't check them.*

The verb **to be** follows a different pattern: *I/he/she/it was* and *you/we/they were*.

b Irregular verbs

Some verbs do not add **-ed** to the bare infinitive to form the past simple, but change in other ways. Look at the example of the verb **to go**:

<i>I went</i>	<i>I didn't go</i>	<i>Did I go?</i>
<i>You went</i>	<i>You didn't go</i>	<i>Did you go?</i>
<i>He/she/it went</i>	<i>He/she/it didn't go</i>	<i>Did he/she/it go?</i>
<i>We went</i>	<i>We didn't go</i>	<i>Did we go?</i>
<i>They went</i>	<i>They didn't go</i>	<i>Did they go?</i>

There is a list of other common irregular verbs in Appendix 2, page 188.

c Completed actions

The past simple is used to talk about completed actions in the past:

Baring's, the oldest merchant bank in England, collapsed in 1995 when a rogue trader in the Singapore branch lost £800 million on currency deals. Later that year, the Dutch group ING bought the entire bank for the sum of £1.

d Time expressions with prepositions

As in the example above, the past simple is often used with past time expressions:

at 6 o'clock/1.15/the end of the year/Christmas

on Tuesday/15th May/the 21st/New Year's Day

in January/1987/the 1980s/summer

no preposition: *yesterday/yesterday morning/last Monday/next April/a few days ago/the day before yesterday/when I was young*

Presentation

a Form

The present perfect tense is formed by using the present tense of the auxiliary *have* and the past participle. For negatives and questions we also use the present tense of the auxiliary *have* and the past participle:

<i>I have/'ve taken</i>	<i>I have not/haven't taken</i>	<i>Have I taken?</i>
<i>You have/'ve taken</i>	<i>You have not/haven't taken</i>	<i>Have you taken?</i>
<i>He/she/it has/'s taken</i>	<i>He/she/it has not/hasn't taken</i>	<i>Has he/she/it taken?</i>
<i>We have/'ve taken</i>	<i>We have not/haven't taken</i>	<i>Have we taken?</i>
<i>They have/'ve taken</i>	<i>They have not/haven't taken</i>	<i>Have they taken?</i>

The past participles of regular verbs end in *-d* or *-ed*, and have the same form as the past simple. For a list of irregular verbs, see Appendix 2, page 188.

Note: The short forms of the positive and negative are commonly used in speech and informal writing.

b Present result of the past

The present perfect often links a present situation with something that happened at an unspecified time in the past. Therefore we do not use specific time expressions such as *yesterday*, *last week*, *in 1998*, *two days ago*, etc.:

I have given your report to the MD.

(Past action: *I gave* her your report *yesterday*. Present result: *She has* the report *now*.)

I have sent them the samples they wanted.

(Past action: *I sent* the samples *this morning*. Present result: *They are* in the post *now*.)

c Specific and non-specific time

If we say when something happened, we use the past simple, not the present perfect:

wrong: **I have spoken* to her *yesterday*.

right: *I spoke* to her *yesterday*.

Similarly, with expressions such as *on Monday*, *in 1987*, *at 3.30*, etc. (see Unit 4), or with questions beginning *When ...?* and *How long ago ...?*, we use the past simple and not the present perfect.

d Just

The present perfect is often used with the word *just* to talk about very recent news or actions that have taken place very recently. Again, the exact time is not mentioned:

I'm sorry, Mrs Smith is not here. She has just left.

e Been and gone

Notice the difference between *has been* and *has gone*:

I'm afraid Mr Smith is not here at the moment. He has gone to a meeting in London.

(He is still at the meeting.)

Amanda has been to the travel agent. *She has* your tickets for Hong Kong.

(She went to the travel agent and has returned.)

Presentation

a *Ever* and *never* + present perfect or past simple

The present perfect is often used with the words *ever* and *never* to talk about general life experience:

Have you ever worked abroad? (i.e., In all your life up to now?)
I have never been to South America. (i.e., Not in all my life up to now.)

The present perfect with *ever* is often followed by the past simple. We use the past simple to give more information about a completed action, when referring to a specific time or context:

Have you ever been to Hong Kong?
 Yes, I *have*. I *worked* there when I was with Coopers and Lybrand.

b *Already* and *yet*

The present perfect is often used with *already* and *yet*:

They are getting on well with the new building. They have already modernized the warehouse, but they haven't decorated the reception area yet.

Already is used in positive sentences. It often indicates that something has taken place slightly earlier than expected. Notice its position in the sentence (between the auxiliary and the verb):

She has already shown me the figures. (not: **She has shown me already ...*)

Yet is used in questions and negatives. It shows that we expect that an action will take place if it has not happened up to now. Notice the position of *yet*, and *not yet*:

wrong: **Have you talked yet to Peter?*
 right: *Have you talked to Peter yet?*
 wrong: **I haven't talked yet to him.*
 right: *I haven't talked to him yet.*

c *Finished* and *unfinished* periods of time

The present perfect is often used with words or phrases indicating periods of time that have not finished yet. Common examples are: *today, this morning, this month, this year, so far, to date, over the last few weeks, up to now, recently*, etc.:

This month we have received a lot of complaints about late deliveries.
 (The month has not finished, and there may be more complaints.)

If we are speaking after one of these time periods, we use the past simple because we are referring to a period of time that has finished. Compare:

Have you seen John this morning?
 (It is now 11.15 in the morning; the morning has not finished.)

Did you see John this morning?
 (It is now 2.30 in the afternoon; the morning has finished.)

Presentation

a Stative verbs + *for* and *since*

The present perfect is often used with *for* and *since* and stative verbs (see Unit 3e) to talk about things that began in the past and have continued up to now:

I have known about the takeover bid *for several weeks*. (And I know now.)

She has owned shares in GM *since she started work there*. (She owns them now.)

b *For* or *since*?

We use *for* to talk about the duration of periods of time and *since* to talk about when a period started. Look at the time line and the examples:



for ten minutes/five days/three months/two years/a long time/ages/etc.

since 10.15/Monday/the 18th/last week/June/1989/I left school/etc.

I have been with this company *for six years*.

I have been in advertising *since the beginning of 2001*.

c *How long ...?*, *for* and *since*

To ask questions about periods of time up to the present, we can use *How long ...?* + the present perfect:

How long have you been in England? *I have been* here *since August/for six months*.

Common mistakes:

We do not use the present simple tense with *for* and *since* to talk about something that began in the past and has gone on up to the present:

wrong: **I am* here *since* December.

right: *I have been* here *since* December.

d Negatives

We can use the present perfect negative to talk about the amount of time that has passed between now and the last time something happened:

We *haven't had* any large orders from them *for several months*.

I'm not sure if his trip is going well. *I haven't heard* from him *since* Monday.

e Completed actions over a period of time

If we talk about a completed action, (particularly if we give details about how much, how many, etc), we can use the present perfect and *since* (but not *for*). We can also use other phrases of duration such as *to date*, *recently*, *over the past five years*, etc. The action itself is finished, but the period of time extends right up to the present:

We *have opened* six new branches *since* July. (From July until now.)

Presentation

a Form

The present perfect continuous is formed with the present perfect of *be* (**have been**) and the **-ing** form of the verb.

<i>I have/’ve been working</i>	<i>I have not/haven’t been working</i>	<i>Have I been working?</i>
<i>You have/’ve been working</i>	<i>You have not/haven’t been working</i>	<i>Have you been working?</i>
<i>He/she/it has/’s been working</i>	<i>He/she/it has not/hasn’t been working</i>	<i>Has he/she/it been working?</i>
<i>We have/’ve been working</i>	<i>We have not/haven’t been working</i>	<i>Have we been working?</i>
<i>They have/’ve been working</i>	<i>They have not/haven’t been working</i>	<i>Have they been working?</i>

Note: The short forms of the positive and negative are commonly used in speech and informal writing.

b Ongoing activities

The present perfect continuous is used with *for*, *since*, *How long ...?* and other expressions of duration (e.g., *all day*), to talk about activities starting in the past and still happening now. The activity may have been going on continuously or repeated several times:

They have been producing cars here for ten years.

(They started producing cars ten years ago. They are still producing cars.)

I have been trying to ring them all day.

(I started trying to ring them this morning. I am still trying to ring them.)

However, we normally use the present perfect simple with stative verbs or for situations we consider permanent (see Unit 3):

Ken has been in London since 9 o’clock this morning. (not: **has been being ...*)

I have lived in London all my life. (not: **have been living ...*)

c Finished and unfinished activities

We use the present perfect simple if we are talking about an action completed recently, particularly if we give details of how much or how many. We use the present perfect continuous when something is still going on:

I’ve written a report for the Director. (It is finished.)

I’ve been writing a report for the Director. (I am still writing it.)

d Negatives

In the negative, the present perfect simple focuses on the amount of time that has passed since something happened. The present perfect continuous focuses on the verb itself:

I haven’t had a holiday for two years. (The last time was two years ago.)

I haven’t been feeling well recently. (This has been continuing for days.)

e Recently finished activities

We can use the present perfect continuous to talk about an activity that has just finished. Often there is something you can see that shows the activity has just finished.

Look – the ground is very wet. It has been raining.

Past simple, present perfect and present perfect continuous

Presentation

a Past simple

We normally use the past simple to talk about actions that took place at a time in the past that is separated from the present. It is used with expressions like *yesterday, on Monday, last week, in 1997, at 6.30, How long ago ...?*, etc.:

*Hans Behrmann **did** an MBA at Harvard **in 2000**.*

*He **joined** IBM **in 2001**.*

We can use the past simple and *for* to talk about something that happened during a period that has now finished:

*I **lived** in Ecuador **for three years**, then I came back to England.*

b Present perfect

The present perfect is used to talk about the present result of past actions and recent events. It is often used with words like *ever, never, just, already, yet*, and phrases of unfinished time such as *so far*:

*NTL **has just announced** that it is cutting the price of broadband Internet access by 20%.*

***Have you ever tried** Chilean wine?*

*We have exchanged emails, but we **have never met**.*

*Don't worry about the order form. I **have already dealt** with it.*

*I'm afraid I **haven't written** that report **yet**. I'll do it tomorrow.*

*The CD was released two weeks ago and **so far** it **has taken** \$1.5m.*

c Present perfect simple with *for* and *since*

The present perfect can be used with *for* and *since* and stative verbs, or to refer to actions that are seen as long term or permanent. We use *for* to talk about the duration of a period of time and *since* to talk about the starting point of an action or state:

*I **have been** with the company **since 1996**.*

*I **have lived** here **for 15 years**.*

It is also used in the negative with *for* and *since* to talk about the last time something took place:

*I **haven't seen** her **since Monday**.*

*I **haven't seen** her **for three days**.*

It is used with *since* to talk about completed actions:

*Property prices **have risen** by 8% **since** the beginning of the year.*

d Present perfect continuous

The present perfect continuous can be used with *for* and *since* to talk about:

a) actions or activities that have gone on repeatedly or continuously for a period of time, and are still going on:

*I've **been trying** to get through to Technical Support, but the line's always engaged.*

b) actions or activities that are ongoing but temporary:

*I've **been working** from home because they're re-decorating my office.*

Presentation

a Form

The past continuous is formed with **was/were** + the **-ing** form of the verb:

<i>I was working</i>	<i>I was not/wasn't working</i>	<i>Was I working?</i>
<i>You were working</i>	<i>You were not/weren't working</i>	<i>Were you working?</i>
<i>He/she/it was working</i>	<i>He/she/it was not/wasn't working</i>	<i>Was he/she/it working?</i>
<i>We were working</i>	<i>We were not/weren't working</i>	<i>Were we working?</i>
<i>They were working</i>	<i>They were not/weren't working</i>	<i>Were they working?</i>

Note: The short forms of the negative are commonly used in speech and informal writing.

b Points of time in the past

We use the past continuous to talk about an action or activity that was in progress at a particular moment of time in the past:

*At 3.15 yesterday afternoon, Signor Antinori **was travelling** to Florence.*

c Interrupted past action

We can use the past continuous to talk about an action or activity that was already in progress, and which was interrupted by another action:

*He **was checking** the accounts when he spotted the error.*

We can rephrase this sentence using **while** + the past continuous:

***While he was checking** the accounts he spotted the error.*

The activity may or may not continue after the interruption:

*Amélie **was writing** a report when her boss asked her to fetch an invoice.*

(Amélie fetched the invoice and then probably carried on writing the report.)

*Amélie **was writing** a report when the fire broke out.*

(Amélie stopped writing the report and left the office.)

d Sequence of tenses

With a time clause like *when the phone rang*, we can use either the past continuous or the past simple.

The past continuous tells us what was happening up to the point when the phone rang:

*When the phone rang, I **was talking** to a client.*

The past simple tells us what happened afterwards:

*When the phone rang, I **answered** it.*

Presentation

c Form

The past perfect is formed with **had** + the past participle of the verb:

<i>I had/'d worked</i>	<i>I had not/hadn't worked</i>	<i>Had I worked?</i>
<i>You had/'d worked</i>	<i>You had not/hadn't worked</i>	<i>Had you worked?</i>
<i>He/she/it had/'d worked</i>	<i>He/she/it had not/hadn't worked</i>	<i>Had he/she/it worked?</i>
<i>We had/'d worked</i>	<i>We had not/hadn't worked</i>	<i>Had we worked?</i>
<i>They had/'d worked</i>	<i>They had not/hadn't worked</i>	<i>Had they worked?</i>

Note: The short forms of the positive and negative are commonly used in speech and informal writing.

o Previous and subsequent events

The past perfect is used to refer back to completed actions that happened before other events in the past. Compare:

- Past simple: ***When I got to the hall, the presentation started.***
(I arrived at the hall, and then the presentation started.)
- Past perfect: ***When I got to the hall, the presentation had started.***
(The presentation started before I got to the hall. I was late.)

In 1, it is also possible to use ***As soon as*** and ***After*** in place of ***When***.

In 2, it is also possible to use ***By the time*** in place of ***When***.

c Present perfect and past perfect

The past perfect acts as the past form of the present perfect (see Units 5–9). It is often used with adverbs like ***just, already, never***. Compare:

*I am nervous because I **have never had** an interview.* (I am about to have an interview.)

*I was nervous because I **had never had** an interview.* (I was about to have an interview.)

The past perfect is often used in reported speech structures (see Units 31–32) and in 3rd conditionals (see Unit 22).

o Past perfect continuous

The past perfect continuous is formed by using the auxiliary ***had been*** + the ***-ing*** form of the verb (*I/he/you/etc. **had (not) been working***).

We use the present perfect continuous to talk about how long an activity has been going on up to the present (see Unit 8). We use the past perfect continuous to talk about the duration of an activity up to a point in the past. Compare:

*I **have been working** here for nine months.*

(I am still working here now.)

*When I left my last job, I **had been working** there for six years.*

(I started in 1995 and I left in 2001.)

We do not use the past perfect continuous with stative verbs like *know, like*, etc. (see Unit 3). Instead, we use the past perfect:

*I recognized my old boss at once even though I **hadn't seen** him for over 20 years.*

Presentation

a Spontaneous decisions

We can use **will** (or the short form **'ll**) + bare infinitive to refer to the future when we make an instant or spontaneous decision to do something:

A: *I haven't seen the minutes of the last meeting yet.*

B: *Sorry – I'll email them to you now.*

We often use the **will** future after **I think** and **I don't think**:

A: **I don't think I'll stay** on in Geneva after the conference.

B: *Nor will I. I think I'll get* a flight back home straight afterwards too.

The negative of **will** is **won't** (**will not**):

I won't stay long. I've got a meeting at 2.15.

Common mistakes: We don't use **won't** after **I think**.

wrong: ***I think I won't** come to the conference.

right: **I don't think I'll** come to the conference.

b Predictions

We can use **will** to make predictions and to state facts that will be true in the future:

Over the next few years, there will be a massive increase in TV channels because of the growth in cable, broadband and satellite services.

c Future time words

We use a present tense (not: ***will**) to refer to the future with time words like: **if, when, before, as soon as, after, etc**:

I will contact you as soon as I get the information. (not: ***will get**)

(See also Unit 19, Conditionals)

d Offers, promises, requests

Will can also be used to ask if someone is willing to do something, to make requests, promises, and threats, and to offer help:

I'm afraid the line is busy. Will you hold? (asking if they are willing)

A: **Will you give me** a hand with these boxes? (making a request)

B: *Of course – I'll take* the big one. (offering help)

Don't worry about the meeting. I will support you. (making a promise)

The word **won't** can mean *is not willing to* or *is refusing to*:

There's something wrong with the printer. It won't print copies in reverse order.

Presentation

a Present continuous – arrangements

The present continuous (see Unit 2) is often used to talk about appointments or things we have arranged to do in the future. We generally use it with a future time phrase:

*Are you **doing** anything this weekend?*

(Have you arranged to do anything?)

*Yes, I'm **playing** golf with Barry on Saturday.*

(I have arranged to play golf with him.)

We do not use the present continuous with stative verbs (see Unit 3).

b *Going to* – decisions

We use the auxiliary *be* + *going to* + bare infinitive to talk about something we intend to do, or have already decided to do:

*According to the papers, Richard Branson **is going to buy** a second island in the Caribbean.*

c *Going to* – predictions

We can also use *going to* for making firm predictions when there is some physical evidence that an event will take place:

*Can you get some more paper for the printer? It's **going to run out** any minute.*

In many cases, however, it is possible to predict future events using either *going to* or *will*.

There is little difference in meaning, but *going to* usually suggests that the event will happen soon. Compare:

*The present government **will win** the election (next year).*

*The present government **is going to win** the election (next week).*

d *Will*, present continuous, or *going to*?

The most important differences between the present continuous, *going to*, and *will* are as follows:

We use the present continuous for arrangements (except with stative verbs):

*I'm **having** a meeting with the Export Manager on Thursday at 2.15.*

We use *going to* for decisions and intentions:

*I've made up my mind. I'm **going to buy** a BMW 730i.*

We use *going to* for firm predictions:

*It's already 28°C. It's **going to be** very hot today.*

We use *will* for spontaneous decisions:

*I wonder if Peter is back from his marketing trip? I'll **give** him a ring.*

We use *will* for promises, offers, and requests:

*I'll **give** you a hand with those boxes if you like.*

We use *will* for general predictions:

*In the twenty first century computers **will play** a vital role in everyone's life.*

(For details of when the present simple is used to refer to the future, see Unit 1.)

14

The future (3): other future tenses

Presentation

a *Was going to*

We can use *was going to/were going to* when we talk about plans or intentions that have changed. Look at the following example:

We intended to launch the model in July, but because of technical problems there was a three-month delay.

We can re-phrase this as:

*We **were going to launch** the model in July, but because of technical problems there was a three-month delay.*



b *Was doing/were doing*

When we talk about an arrangement that has been changed, we can use the past continuous (*was/were doing*):

*I **was flying** to Amsterdam last Friday, but I was needed at the office this weekend, so I'm travelling next Wednesday instead.*

This is similar to *was going to*, but the past continuous is normally used to report changed arrangements rather than changed plans or intentions.

c *Will be doing*

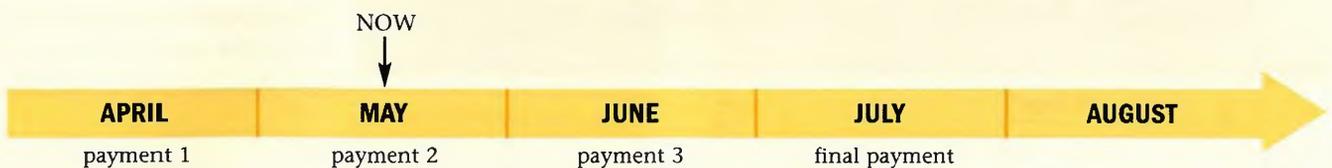
The future continuous (*will be doing*) is used to talk about an activity that will be in progress at a particular moment in the future:



*I'm afraid I can't see you on the 22nd because I **will be attending** a training course in England.*

d *Will have done*

We use the future perfect (*will have done*), and a time phrase with *by*, to talk about something that will be completed before a particular time in the future:



*We **won't have repaid** the loan **by** the end of May.*

Presentation

a *Definitely, probably, etc.*

Definitely, probably, and *perhaps/maybe* show how probable we think a future event is. Notice that *won't* normally comes after *probably* and *definitely*:

Degree of chance:	<i>In the next 10 years ...</i>
100%	computers will definitely become faster and more powerful.
75%	computers will probably get much smaller.
50%	maybe/perhaps computers will be able to recognize speech better.
25%	computers probably won't be able to translate perfectly.
0%	computers definitely won't start having feelings or emotions.

b *Likely to, certain to*

We can also use the verb *be* + *(un)likely/certain* + infinitive to refer to the future. We use the present tense of the verb *be* (*is certain to*) and we do not say: **will be certain to*. We use *certain to* to refer to things that we think are certain, *likely to/expected to* to refer to things that are probable, and *unlikely to* to refer to things that are improbable:

*You'll meet Jane at the Sales Conference next week. She is **certain to** be there.* (definite)

*The final cost of the project is **likely to** be higher than the current estimates.* (probable)

*The European Central Bank is **unlikely to** lower interest rates again this year.* (improbable)

c *I think, I doubt, etc.*

Various verbs and expressions show how probable we think a future event is. For example:

↑ ↓	High probability	<i>I'm quite sure that ...</i>	
		<i>I'm confident that ...</i>	
		<i>I expect that ...</i>	
		<i>The chances are that ...</i>	<i>they will give you a pay rise.</i>
		<i>I should think that ...</i>	
		<i>I shouldn't think that ...</i>	
		<i>I doubt if ...</i>	
		<i>I doubt very much whether ...</i>	
	Low probability	<i>I'm quite sure that + (won't) ...</i>	

d *Modal verbs*

We can use *may, might*, and *could* + bare infinitive to refer to the future:

*The latest statistics suggest that house prices **may/might/could** fall over the coming year.*

(For further information on modal verbs, see Units 23–26.)