

Chapter Five : The Future

Is shall/will go etc. a tense?

Grammarians differ in answering this question

Some of them consider shall/will + base as future tense

Others deny the existence of the future tense in English

Nowadays, the opinion of the majority is that

shall/ will + base is not a tense

i.e. there is no future tense in English

The reasons of why the future in English is not a tense are listed as follow:

1) There is no separate form which refers to future time as the case in the two form expressing the present and the past.

Three of the five forms (go, goes, went) express the two tenses

The remaining two (going, gone) are nonfinite, they are not expressing tense but aspect

2) Combination like shall/will go are used to express other meaning as well as future time.

Thus, “I will go” may mean “I am willing to go now”,
i.e. willingness in the present

3) Every time we want to indicate the present or the past we must choose “go” or “went”; there are no other means more basic and more frequently used than these form

Future time in Arabic

The view taken here is that Arabic, like the English has no future tenses but means of expressing future time.

The main ways of expressing the future time in Arabic are:

- a) The bare imperfect
- b) The imperfect used with certain particles

Means of expressing Future time in English

It has already been mentioned that future time in English is not expressed by means of tense but by other devices, these are:

(a) The modals shall/will + infinitive.

{ shall is used with first person only, mainly in British English }

- I shall try to be there tonight.

{ will is used with all the three persons }

- She will be back tomorrow
- Will you come to the zoo.

(b) Be going to + infinitive

- Expresses future of present intention (personal subject)
 - Or present indication or cause (non-personal and personal subject)
1. I am going to pay the bill next week. (intention)
 2. It is going to rain soon. (indication – cloud)
 3. The chair is going to collapse. (indication)

(c) Progressive aspect, present

- This construction expresses future of present arrangement. It is usually used with adverbial indicating the future, since its basic meaning is “an action happening now”.
 - **They are leaving for Paris next month.**
- The sentence “*they are leaving for Paris*” is ambiguous between “*now*” and “*next month*” unless the context makes the time reference clear.

(d) Simple aspect, present

- The simple aspect, present tense is usually used to express future time fixed in the present, as in calendar events and plans.
 - *I leave for Roma tomorrow.*
- It also need for adverbial of future.
- It is almost confined to verbs of motions.
 - *They arrive tomorrow.*
 - *They have a party tomorrow.*
 - *It rains tomorrow.*

(e) The modals shall/will + progressive aspect

- This construction is often used especially in spoken English to denote future time.
 - *I will be looking after you.*
 - *We shall be coming this way again.*

(f) Be + about to + infinitive

- *Be about to* is used with *infinitive* to refer to near future.
 - *The plane is about to take off.*

(g) Be to + infinitive

- This construction denotes future with present arrangement, command or predestined event.
 - *We are to meet here at six o'clock. (arrangement)*
 - *You are to pay for the whole damage. (command)*
 - *He has to work harder, if he is to succeed in his present job. (predestined requirement)*

Future in the past in English

A) The modal **Would**

- HE would go the next day to the town hall to meet her
- I knew you **would help** him.
- I knew you **would not help** him.

Future in the past in English

B) Be going to + infinitive

- They were going to visit us the following week.
(they did not)
- I knew you **were going to go** to the party.
- I knew you **were not going to go** to the party.

C) Past Tense, Progressive Aspect

- She was taking the nine-thirty train next morning.

D) Be to + infinitive

- He was to pay for the damage.
- We were to marry the next summer.

D) Be about to + infinitive

- * She was about to fall. (near future in the past)

Future in the past is used to express the idea that in the past you thought something would happen in the future. It does not matter if you are correct or not. Future in the past follows the same basic rules as the [simple future](#). "Would" is used to volunteer or promise, and "was going to" is used to plan. Moreover, both forms can be used to make predictions about the future.

Examples:

- I told you he **was going to come** to the party. *plan*
- I knew Julie **would make** dinner. *voluntary action*
- Jane said Sam **was going to bring** his sister with him, but he came alone. *plan*
- I had a feeling that the vacation **was going to be** a disaster. *prediction*
- He promised he **would send** a postcard from Egypt. *promise*

REMEMBER No Future in Time Clauses

Like all future forms, future in the past cannot be used in clauses beginning with time expressions such as: when, while, before, after, by the time, as soon as, if, unless, etc. Instead of using future in the past, you must use simple past.

Examples:

- I already told Mark that when he would arrive, we would go out for dinner. *Not Correct*
- I already told Mark that when he arrived, we would go out for dinner. *Correct*

ACTIVE / PASSIVE

Examples:

- I knew John **would finish** the work by 5:00 PM. *Active*
- I knew the work **would be finished** by 5:00 PM. *Passive*
- I thought Sally **was going to make** a beautiful dinner. *Active*
- I thought a beautiful dinner **was going to be made** by Sally. *Passive*