4.1 Expressing the future

Present simple

We use the present simple to talk about future events that are fixed because they are based on a schedule, calendar or timetable.

Pete's flight lands at 11.00 tomorrow morning.
What time does the film start?

Present continuous

We use the present continuous to talk about personal arrangements for a future day or date.

I'm meeting up with Olivia tonight.
I'm not doing anything later.

1 Choose the correct words.

1 We **have / are having** a meeting tomorrow to discuss how to raise funds.
2 According to the timetable, the drama group **rehearses / is rehearsing** at six o'clock.
3 What **do you do / are you doing** later?
4 **Does everyone go / Is everyone going** to Luke's party on Saturday?
5 They **don't hold / aren't holding** a meeting this week.
6 The football match **ends / is ending** at 7.00, so we can watch the film afterwards.

going to

We use *be + going to* to talk about:

- intentions.
  Ben's going to join a gym.
- predictions about the future based on something we can see in the present.
  Look at the sky. It's going to be a beautiful day.

Compare:

going to **They aren't going to stay very long.** (That is their intention.)

will / won't **They won't stay very long.** (I predict this.)

Sometimes there is little difference between *going to* and the present continuous when talking about the future.

We're going to have a party next weekend.
We're having a party next weekend.

We use the present continuous to talk about a definite plan for which the arrangements have been made. And we use *going to* to show that the plan is only an intention.

may / might

We use *may* or *might* when we are less certain about the future. Although *may* is considered to be more definite than *might*, there is, in fact, very little difference in meaning between the two words.

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6 The football match ends / is ending at 7.00, so we can watch the film afterwards.

2 Rewrite the sentences. Use the present simple or the present continuous form of the verbs in brackets.

1 Jan and Kim have decided to go to Amy's party on Saturday. (go)

.....

2 Sarah has just bought a plane ticket for a flight to Madrid next Tuesday. (fly)

.....

3 The plane's departure time is 0920. (leave)

.....

4 The summer lecture programme is scheduled to begin on 15 June. (start)

.....

5 Matt and Jamie have booked a badminton court for later. (play)

.....

will

We use *will* and *won't* to talk about:

- promises and hopes for the future, often with verbs like *hope, expect* or *promise* + *that* (you can omit *that*).
  I hope (that) you'll be very happy here.
  We can also use the infinitive with *to* after these verbs.
  We hope to arrange another meeting soon.
- predictions, often after *I think* or *I don't think*, or future facts that we are certain about.
  I don't think it will be difficult to pass this exam.
  That plant won't survive for long without water.
- future facts that we are less certain about, with *probably*.
  We will probably go to the park, but it depends on the weather.

between the two words.

3 Complete the sentences with the correct form of *will* or *be going to* and one of the verbs below.

■ start ■ cause ■ not go ■ fall ■ not take ■ make

1 I hope this ..... a long time. I'm very busy.
2 It is clear that further drought ..... very serious problems in the area.
3 Look at that man! He ..... off the roof!
4 We ..... to the meeting. We've got too much work to do.
5 Clean water ..... probably ..... the biggest difference to the people in the village.
6 They ..... a campaign to help promote the message.

4 Match 1–8 to a–h to make sentences.

1 I've got a cold, so I probably
2 Sarah and I won't be at the picnic, but we
3 It's great news. We're
4 Good luck. I hope I
5 Mike isn't sure, but he thinks
6 The temperature is dropping. It
7 Carla isn't certain, but she
8 They intended to join us on the protest, but they

a might meet us later
b aren't going to come now.
c won't go swimming later.
d the journey will take about three hours.
e going to get a dog, at last.
f may see you at Jack's party.
g 'll see you again soon.
h 's going to be very cold tonight.

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