

Future continuous tense

Form

Positive statement: I will be speaking (I'll be speaking)

Negative statement: I will not be speaking (I won't be speaking)

Question form: Will you be speaking?

Negative question: Will you not be speaking? (Won't you be speaking?)

Use

1. The future continuous tense is used for activities that will be in progress at a point of time. The action will start before that point of time and will continue after it. The point in time can be given by time expressions or by other activities.

- At 8 o'clock I will be travelling to Dorset.

- This time tomorrow we'll be lying on the beach.

(In these two sentences the point of time that we refer to is given by a time expression.)

- The shop will be closed. Will you be working?

- I'll be sleeping when you come back.

(In these two sentences the point of time that we refer to is given by another action.)

2. It describes the idea that an action will happen in the normal course of events. It refers to routine activities, not intentions, decisions or plans.

- I'll be writing to you again. (I always write to you, so I'll do it again, as usual.)

- They'll be leaving on Friday. You can join them. (They normally leave on Fridays.)

- Everybody will be working on a computer sooner or later. (If nothing special happens.)

Note

We can also use present tenses for future. But they have a different meaning from the future tense. Compare the following examples of sentences.

- We are going to the cinema next weekend. (We have already arranged it. We know the time and place and probably have the tickets.)

- We'll be going to the cinema next weekend. (We have not arranged anything and, probably, we do not even know which film we want to see. We only say how we will spend the weekend.)

- I am seeing Susan tomorrow. (I have some reason. Susan and I have arranged the time and place.)

- I'll be seeing Susan tomorrow. (Susan is my classmate and because I will go to school tomorrow, I will see her as usual.)

Note:

In the following examples the first ones express intentions, while in the second ones there is no intention, they express routine activities.

- Bill won't play football tomorrow. (The fact is that Bill cannot play or does not want to play for some reason.)
- Bill won't be playing football tomorrow. (Bill will not play, because it will be Friday and he never plays on Fridays.)
- I'll call Mimi tonight. I'll ask her. (I will do it because I need to talk to her.)
- I'll be calling Mimi tonight. I can ask her. (I call her every night, that is why I will call her tonight too.)

Remember:

In some cases we can use several forms. But each of them will have a slightly different meaning.

- I'll be meeting Jim next week. (I meet Jim every week and it will be the same next week.)
- I'll meet Jim next week. (I intend to meet Jim next week or I suppose that I will meet him.)
- I'm going to meet Jim next week. (I decided to meet Jim some time ago and now I am expressing my intention.)
- I'm meeting Jim next week. (We have arranged the time and place because we have some reason to meet. We use the present continuous.)
- It will rain, I'm afraid. (I assume it will rain, it is my opinion. But who knows!)
- It's going to rain. (I am sure it will rain because I can see the dark clouds in the sky. My opinion is based on clear evidence.)
- I am meeting is more definite than I am going to meet and I will meet is the least definite.