

UNIT 8 Will or going to?

a) Talking about future actions

We use both **will** and **going to** to talk about our future actions but there is a clear difference. Study this example situation:

Helen's bicycle has a flat tyre. She tells her father. Helen: My bicycle has a flat tyre. Can you repair it for me? Father: Okay, but I can't do it now. I'll repair it tomorrow.	will: We use will when we decide to do something at the time of speaking. The speaker has not decided before. Before Helen told her father, he didn't know about the flat tyre.
Later, Helen's mother speaks to her husband. Mother: Can you repair Helen's bicycle? It has a flat tyre. Father: Yes, I know. She told me. I'm going to repair it tomorrow.	going to: We use going to when we have already decided to do something. Helen's father had already decided to repair the bicycle before his wife spoke to him.

Here is another example:

- Tom is cooking when he suddenly finds that there isn't any salt:
Tom: Ann, we haven't got any salt.
Ann: Oh, haven't we? **I'll get** some from the shop then. (*she decides at the time of speaking*)

Before going out, Ann talks to Jim:

- Ann: **I'm going to get** some salt from the shop. (*she has already decided*)
Can I get you anything, Jim?

b) Saying what will happen (predicting future happenings)

We use both **will** and **going to** to say what we think will happen in the future:

- Do you think Tom **will get** the job?
- Oh dear, it's already 4 o'clock. We're **going to be** late.

We use **going to** (not **will**) when there is something in the present situation that shows what will happen in the future (especially the near future). The speaker feels sure about what will happen because of the situation now (see also Unit 5d):

- Look at those black clouds. It's **going to rain**. (the clouds are there *now*)
- I feel terrible. I think **I'm going to be** sick. (I feel terrible *now*)

Do not use **will** in situations like these.

Otherwise, it is safer to use **will** (see also Unit 7):

- Ann **will** probably arrive at about 8 o'clock.
- I think Tom **will** like the present you bought for him.

UNIT 8 Exercises

8.1 In this exercise you have to put the verb into the correct form using **will** or **going to**.

Examples: A: Why are you turning on the television?

B: I **am going to watch** (watch) the news.

A: Oh, I've just realised – I haven't got any money.

B: Don't worry – that's no problem. I **'ll lend** (lend) you some.

Those clouds are very black, aren't they? I think it **is going to rain** (rain).

- 1 A: I've got a terrible headache.
B: Have you? Wait there and I (get) an aspirin for you.
- 2 A: Why are you filling that bucket with water?
B: I (wash) the car.
- 3 A: I've decided to re-paint this room.
B: Oh, have you? What colour (you/paint) it?
- 4 A: Look! There's smoke coming out of that house. It's on fire!
B: Good heavens! I (call) the fire-brigade immediately.
- 5 A: The ceiling in this room doesn't look very safe, does it?
B: No, it looks as if it (fall) down.
- 6 A: Where are you going? Are you going shopping?
B: Yes, I (buy) something for dinner.
- 7 A: I can't work out how to use this camera.
B: It's quite easy. I (show) you.
- 8 A: What would you like to drink – tea or coffee?
B: I (have) tea, please.
- 9 A: Has George decided on what to do when he leaves school?
B: Oh yes. Everything is planned. He (have) a holiday for a few weeks and then he (start) a computer programming course.
- 10 A: Did you post that letter for me?
B: Oh, I'm sorry. I completely forgot. I (do) it now.
- 11 A: What shall we have for dinner?
B: I don't know. I can't make up my mind.
A: Come on, hurry up! Make a decision!
B: Okay then. We (have) chicken.
- 12 Jack: We need some bread for lunch.
Ben: Oh, do we? I (go) to the shop and get some. I feel like a walk.
Before he goes out, Ben talks to Jane:
Ben: I (get) some bread. Do you want anything from the shop?
Jane: Yes, I need some envelopes.
Ben: Okay, I (get) you some.
- 13 *John has to go to the airport to catch a plane. He hasn't got a car:*
John: Alan, can you take me to the airport this evening?
Alan: Of course I (take) you. I'd be delighted.
Later that day Eric offers to take John to the airport.
Eric: John, do you want me to take you to the airport?
John: No thanks, Eric. Alan (take) me.