

Extension exercises

Chapter 14: The future

Exploring English

Select an article or feature from a newspaper which makes reference to the future. Also ask someone to talk about their plans (for example, for the evening or weekend) and, if possible, record them doing so. Try to avoid giving away your interest in what forms they choose to express future time.

Analyse the ways future time is expressed in both these texts.

- 1 To what extent could you predict the choices they make from the standard rules of thumb for future tenses?
- 2 Account for any choices that don't follow these rules of thumb.

Course materials

Choose an English language course which covers a range of levels. Examine the material which teaches ways of expressing future time.

- 1 In what order and at which levels are the tenses introduced?
- 2 Where one form has more than one future meaning (for example, we use *going to* for both plans and predictions) are the different meanings considered together or at different places in the course?
- 3 Are the different ways of expressing time presented under formal labels (for example, present simple), under meaning labels (for example, plans) or are both kinds of label used?
- 4 Are there exercises in which learners have to choose between different forms of the verb according to the context (for example, gap-fill exercises or exercises in which the verb is provided in its infinitive form and the learner has to 'put it into the correct tense')? In these exercises, is only one choice always considered to be acceptable, or is the student encouraged to consider whether other forms might also be appropriate?

Comparing reference grammars

Different reference grammars of English pay substantially different amounts of attention to the meanings of future tense forms. They also sometimes appear to disagree in the way they explain the meanings of these forms.

Choose two future tense forms, and compare how these are treated in two reference grammars of English.

- 1 How clearly are the meanings explained and illustrated?
- 2 What use (if any) do the grammars make of authentic text to illustrate this?
- 3 How much attention (if any) do the grammars pay to factors other than meaning that can affect the choices we make (factors such as personal preference, formality or type of text)?
- 4 Which of these grammars would you recommend to learners?