Teaching the future tense in English is not all that difficult. Most students can easily recognize future forms because they know that it is constructed with will or shall. There is a problem, though. We use several different structures to talk about future. Many of them don’t even use the auxiliaries will / shall.

For example, a very common structure used to talk about the future is going to. In fact, this is the structure mostly used to talk about our plans. Will, on the other hand, is mainly used to speculate about the future. This can often confuse students because they don’t quite understand which form is more appropriate to express a particular idea.

**Introducing the Future**

It is always a good idea for teachers to introduce the future forms by talking about their plans. Once students become familiar with structures involving going to, they can introduce future forms with will.

Talking about plans

Here are some sample sentences.

- She is going to graduate next month.
- We are going to have a meeting tomorrow.
- She is going to act in another film.
- That is going to be a great affair.
- Who is going to cook dinner?

**Making predictions**

- I think she will come tomorrow.
- I’m sure I will get a raise.
- I will probably visit my parents next week.
- She will recover soon.

Now here are some sentences that combine both forms.

- Next month, I am going to take a foreign vacation. It will probably be costly. I am going to visit Brazil and Argentina. During the vacation, I will visit my brother who lives in Rio.