

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.
Father: Yes, I know. She told me. I'm going to repair it tomorrow.	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.

Ann: **Oh, haven't we? I'll get some from the shop then.** (*she decides at the time of speaking*)

