

Unit 30

May and might (future)

a We use **may** or **might** to talk about possible happenings or possible actions in the future. Study these examples:

- I'm not sure where to go for my holidays but I **may go** to Italy.
(= perhaps I will go)
- The weather forecast is not very good. It **might rain** this afternoon.
(= perhaps it will rain)
- I can't help you. Why don't you ask Tom? He **might be able** to help you.
(= perhaps he will be able to help)

The negative form is **may not** or **might not** (**mightn't**):

- Ann **may not come** to the party tonight. She isn't feeling well.
(= perhaps she won't come)
- There **might not be** a meeting on Friday because the director is ill.
(= perhaps there won't be a meeting)

It doesn't matter whether you use **may** or **might**. You can say:

- I **may go** to Italy. *or* I **might go** to Italy.

b There is also a continuous form: **may/might be doing**. Compare this with **will be doing** (see **Unit 10a, b**):

- Don't phone at 8.30. I'll **be watching** the football match on television.
- Don't phone at 8.30. I **may** (or **might**) **be watching** the football match on television. (= perhaps I'll be in the middle of watching it)

You can also use the continuous (**may/might be doing**) when you are talking about possible plans. Compare:

- I'm **going** to Italy in July. (for sure)
- I **may** (or **might**) **be going** to Italy in July. (it's possible)

But you can also say: **I may/might go** to Italy in July.

c May as well, might as well

Study this example:

A: What shall we do this evening?
B: I don't know. Any ideas?
A: Well, there's film on television. It sounds quite interesting.
B: **We might as well watch it** then. There's nothing else to do.

We use **may/might as well** to say that we should do something but only because there is no reason not to do it and because there is nothing better to do. **We might as well watch it** means 'Why not watch it? There's nothing better to do.'

- You'll have to wait an hour for the next bus, so **you might as well walk**.
- **We may as well go** to the party. We've nothing else to do.
- 'Shall we have dinner now?' **'We might as well.'**

For **may** and **might** see also **Units 29** and **36c**. For **may** only, see **Unit 31**.

about possible plans. Compare: