Talking about the future

The tense of a verb tells us when the action was done. The action can be done in the past, present or future.

There are three main ways of talking about the future. For example:

- *I think I will work late tomorrow* = future tense
- *I am working late tomorrow* = present continuous tense
- *I am going to work late tomorrow* = ‘going to’ + verb

The future tense

The future tense is made by ‘will’ or ‘shall’ + the verb, as in the example above: *‘I think I will work late tomorrow.’* (Note that ‘will’ and ‘shall’ are often shortened.) This tense is used to talk about a prediction or unplanned/uncertain events. For example:

- Autumn will soon be here.
- It’ll break if you drop it.
- What will you do? I don’t know what I’ll do

The present-continuous tense

The present continuous is used when plans are discussed. It’s useful to talk about definite arrangements in the near future, as in the example above *‘I am working late tomorrow.’* For example:

- What time are you leaving tomorrow? I’m leaving at 8 o’clock.
- I’m going out tomorrow.
- I’m getting a new car next week.

The use of ‘going to’

‘Going to’ + the verb is used to talk a decision. For example:

- What are you going to do this evening?
- I’m going to watch a film on TV.
- He’s going to play football.

This form can also be used to predict something that there is already evidence of: For example:

- I think it’s going to rain.