

### **Nuala's Grammar Explanation:**

There are a number of different ways of talking about the future in English. Today we're looking at two ways to talk about future plans: Using the present continuous and going to.

In an earlier programme we saw that the present continuous is used to describe actions that are happening at the time of speaking. We can also use the same form to talk about and ask about future plans that have already been made such as fixed arrangements

What are you doing at the weekend?

I'm visiting my parents.

I'm travelling to Spain on business.

Another way of talking about future plans is to use going to plus infinitive. We've seen previously that this form can be used to talk about future prediction. It can also be used to talk about your intentions or decisions for the future.

I'm going to study medicine at university.

I'm going to visit my mother.

I'm going to get a new car.

So to recap, both the present continuous and going to plus infinitive can be used to talk about future plans. Often there is not much difference between them and you can use either form but generally if a plan is a fixed arrangement then the present continuous is best. If a plan is an intention or a decision then going to is the better form to use.

That's all from me, good luck with your grammar challenge.

### Find out more

Although both 'going to' and the present continuous are present forms they can be used to talk about the future. This is because the future plan has already been made and exists in the present, it is not something which is decided at the moment of speaking.

| Present continuous |            |   |
|--------------------|------------|---|
| Subject            | to be      | verb + ing  |
| I                  | am<br>'m   | babysitting tonight.<br>studying this weekend.<br>not doing anything next week.<br>seeing the dentist on Tuesday.<br>seeing friends at the weekend.<br>meeting at 12.00 with the bank manager |
| S / he             | is<br>'s   |   |
| You<br>We<br>They  | are<br>'re |   |

| Going to          |            |          |  |
|-------------------|------------|----------|--|
| Subject           | to be      | going to | base infinitive  |
| I                 | am<br>'m   | going to | watch a film tomorrow<br>do the shopping later.<br>take the train.<br>start music lessons soon.<br>study really hard at the weekend. |
| S / he            | is<br>'s   |          |  |
| You<br>We<br>They | are<br>'re |          |  |