

Lesson Plan: Present continuous for future arrangements

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| Level | Beginner / Intermediate (A2–B1) |
| Time | 50–60 minutes |
| Skills | Grammar, speaking |
| Focus | Fixed future plans; present continuous vs. going to vs. will; diary/calendar language |

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Use the present continuous to describe fixed future plans and arrangements
- Distinguish between present continuous (arranged), going to (intended), and will (spontaneous)
- Ask and answer questions about plans using the present continuous
- Understand that context determines which future form is most appropriate

TARGET LANGUAGE & EXAMPLES

Present continuous for future — confirmed plans

- I'm meeting Tom at 3 o'clock. (arranged, confirmed)
- She's flying to Rome on Friday. (booked)
- We're having dinner at Marco's tonight. (planned in advance)
- Are you doing anything this weekend?

Three future forms — the key contrast

- will: spontaneous decision at the moment of speaking: 'I'll answer that.'
- going to: intention or plan (not yet arranged): 'I'm going to learn Spanish.'
- Present continuous: confirmed arrangement (often booked): 'I'm starting Spanish classes on Monday.'

Time expressions with future arrangements

- tonight, this weekend, next Monday, on Friday, at 5 o'clock, later today, in two weeks' time

Meaning & Nuance

| Situation | Best form | Example |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| You decide right now to help | will | I'll carry that for you. |
| You've planned to do this for a while | going to | I'm going to apply for a new job. |
| You've booked / confirmed it | present continuous | I'm starting on the 15th. |
| Evidence-based prediction | going to | Look at those clouds — it's going to rain. |
| General future prediction | will | The meeting will finish by noon, I think. |
| Formal announcement | will | The conference will be held on 23 May. |

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up: What are you doing this weekend? (5 min)

Task: Class chat: students share one thing they're doing this weekend.

- Teacher writes examples on the board — ask: 'Is it already arranged? Booked?'

→ Naturally sets up the distinction between going to and present continuous.

2. Presentation (15 min)

Task: Three-way comparison with clear context sentences and a timeline.

- The diary/calendar analogy: if it's in your calendar, use present continuous.
- Going to = in your head. Will = just decided right now.
- Contrast: 'I'm going to see a doctor.' (plan) vs. 'I'm seeing a doctor on Thursday.' (booked)

3. Diary activity (15 min)

Task: Students fill in a week diary with 6 planned activities, then ask a partner about theirs.

- 'What are you doing on Tuesday evening?' — 'I'm having dinner with my parents.'
- 'Are you free on Thursday?' — 'No, I'm working late.'

4. Error correction (10 min)

Task: Identify which future form is most natural in each context.

- 'I'm going to meet her at 8.' (booked → I'm meeting her at 8.)
- 'I'll visit Japan next year.' (intention, not booked → I'm going to visit Japan.)

TEACHER NOTES

- This is one of the most misunderstood points. The calendar analogy — 'if it's in your calendar, use present continuous' — is highly reliable.
- Learners often use going to for all future situations — this lesson creates a productive need to distinguish.

EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one or more:

1. Write about your plans for next week using present continuous for 5 confirmed arrangements.
2. Write 6 sentences contrasting will, going to, and present continuous for different future situations.
3. Write a short dialogue where two people make plans for the weekend.