

Review: Modals of Predictions

Modal Verbs:

The English modal verbs are often challenging for learners of English. This happens for many reasons, including both grammar and meaning. In this unit, we'll begin to look at will.

Will #1:

Predictions

One use for the modal auxiliary **will** is in showing someone's predictions about the future things that someone speaks or writes about before they actually happen.

When **will** is used, it's commonly contracted to 'll. It's also common to use a contraction for the negative form of will: **will not** becomes **won't**.

Both the affirmative and negative forms of will are used in making predictions:

Examples:

- The sky's awfully dark.
- It certainly is. I think we'll have rain before morning.

(B is making a prediction. He or she doesn't actually *know* that there will be rain before morning).

- I'm worried about my algebra test.
- You'll be fine! You studied for a long time

(B is making a prediction. He or she doesn't actually *know* that A will do fine).

- Where's Mr. Sato's office?
- It's right over there--but he probably won't be there. I think he's in a meeting.

(B is making a prediction. He or she doesn't actually *know* that Mr. Sato won't be in his office).

- What are Frank's chances in the race?
- He'll be lucky if he gets second or third place. He won't win because at least two of the runners are faster than he is.

(B is making two predictions. He or she doesn't actually *know* that Frank will be lucky to get second or third place and he doesn't actually *know* that Frank won't win).

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Special Notes:

1. **Be going to** may also be used in making predictions:

I think we're **going to** have rain before morning.

You're **going to** do fine!

Mr. Sato probably **isn't going to** be in his office.

Frank's **going to** be lucky if he gets second or third place.

Frank's not **going to** win (Frank **isn't going to** win).

1. In fast, casual speech, **going to** sounds something like "**gonna**". This form is common in speaking, but it isn't appropriate for most written work.

When people use **going to** in casual speech, they usually contract **be**, but it is often difficult to hear. Also, "gonna" is a "relaxed" form of **going to**, so it is **not** followed by **to**.

not this: *I gonna leave now.

or these: *I gonna to leave now. / *I'm gonna to leave now.

but this: I'm gonna leave now.

not this: *You gonna be sorry!

or these: *You gonna to be sorry! /*You're gonna to be sorry!

but this: You're gonna be sorry!

But remember:

"Gonna" is used in **spoken** language, not in most forms of written language.

Source: Dave Sperling ESL cafe