

Future continuous and perfect

English B2

What this topic teaches

Two tenses that look into the future with a camera. The **future continuous** – *will be + verb-ing* – shows an action **in progress** at a future moment. The **future perfect** – *will have + participle* – shows an action **finished** by a future deadline .

- *This time tomorrow, I **will be sitting** on the beach.* (The camera catches me mid-sit.)
- *By Friday, I **will have finished** my homework.* (Friday is the deadline; the homework is already done when it arrives.)
- Memory hook: the future continuous is a **photo of the future**; the future perfect is a **deadline with the work already inside it**.
- These are calm, elegant tenses. Chinese says with time words; English builds the moment into the verb.

The forms

Tense	Form	Example
future continuous	will be + -ing	She will be working at nine.
future perfect	will have + participle	She will have finished by ten.

- Negatives: *won't be working, won't have finished*. Questions flip *will*: *Will you be sleeping at midnight?* (Yes. Yes, you will.)
- Both use *will*, so no person changes anywhere. The future stays grammatically lazy, even at B2.

The photo vs the deadline

Future continuous (in progress at...)	Future perfect (finished by...)
This time next week, we'll be flying to Beijing.	By this time next week, we'll have landed .
At eight tonight, I'll be doing my homework.	By nine, I'll have finished it. (Allegedly.)
In 2030, they'll be studying at university.	By 2030, they'll have forgotten me.

- Signal words: *this time tomorrow / at eight tonight* invite the continuous; **by** + a *deadline* invites the perfect. *By* is the deadline word; learn to hear it.

- $\triangle$ *by Friday* means “no later than Friday” – the work can finish any time before. *Until Friday* would mean the work continues up to Friday. *By* finishes early; *until* lasts.

The polite continuous

The future continuous has a secret social skill: it asks about plans **softly**, without demanding a decision.

- *Will you be using the computer tonight?* – softer and safer than “*Will you use the computer?*” which can sound like a challenge .
- *Will you be staying for dinner?* – a warm question, no pressure.
- Memory hook: the continuous wraps the question in a blanket . The plan is assumed; the question just checks the details.

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- $\triangle$ **Don’t build the future perfect without *have*.** “*I will finished by Friday*” $\times$ – the chain is *will have + participle*, all three links.
- $\triangle$ ***by* vs *until*.** *I’ll finish by Friday* (deadline) vs *I’ll be working until Friday* (duration). covers both ideas in Chinese; English splits them.
- $\triangle$ **The time gate still applies.** *When I arrive, I’ll be waiting? No wait – “*When I will arrive*” is still illegal. *When I arrive, I’ll call you.* The gates from B1 topic 5 never close.
- $\triangle$ **Don’t use the future perfect for vague futures.** It needs a deadline. “*I will have finished my homework*” with no *by*-phrase leaves the listener asking: by when? Give the deadline or use *will*.

Say it aloud

Photograph your future, then deadline it.

- This time tomorrow, I’ll be sitting in the exam. The pen will be shaking. The brain will be fine. Probably.
- By the end of this year, I’ll have learned two thousand words. By the end of today, I’ll have learned ten. Both are victories .
- Will you be using your dictionary tonight? – No, I won’t. It’s all yours.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. *This time tomorrow, I _____ (sit) on the beach.* – **will be sitting**. A photo of the future, mid-sit.
2. *By Friday, I _____ (finish) my homework.* – **will have finished**. The deadline already contains the work.
3. *_____ you _____ (use) the computer tonight?* – **Will ... be using**. The soft, blanketed question.
4. *I'll be working here _____ Friday.* (continuing up to Friday) – **until**. Duration, not deadline.
5. *"I will have finish by nine."* – $\times \rightarrow$ **will have finished**. All three links.