

# 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

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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, blanket 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.