

# 45 Other ways to talk about the future



## 1 was/were going to

We use *was/were going to* to talk about something that was expected or planned for the future but it didn't happen. We sometimes call this form 'the future in the past':

*In 2005 they were going to build a supermarket here.* (= There was a plan to build it.)

*When I was younger I was going to be a ballet dancer.* (= I expected to do this in the future.)

*I wasn't going to work today, but the boss called me in.* (= I didn't expect to work today.)

We often use this form

- to talk about something we expected to happen but in fact didn't happen:  
*I was going to study medicine but my grades weren't good enough for medical school.*
- to make excuses about something we failed to do:  
*I was going to finish my homework but I didn't have time.*  
*We were going to buy some more milk but we left our money at home. Sorry.*

Past continuous for plans that did not happen ► Unit 31.4

## 2 Expressions with a future meaning

We use *am/is/are to* + infinitive in formal situations to talk about future events:

*The president is to talk to the nation tomorrow.*

*The bridge is to be opened by the mayor on July 20th.*

We often use this form in news reports and in instructions or orders:

*The police are to start house-to-house enquiries this week.*

*The driver of the stolen car is to appear in court tomorrow.*

*These pills are to be taken three times a day.*

*You are to report for duty at 9.00 a.m.*

We use *am/is/are about to* + infinitive to talk about an action that will happen in the immediate future:

*Hurry up! The train's about to leave.*

*I can't talk now – my phone battery is about to run out.*

Some verbs and other expressions also have a future meaning:

<i>be due to</i>	<i>The new computer is due to arrive tomorrow.</i>
<i>be sure/certain to</i>	<i>The test isn't difficult. I'm sure to pass it.</i>
<i>be likely to</i>	<i>I don't think we're likely to get a refund as we don't have a receipt.</i>
<i>expect</i>	<i>The company expects to announce its annual results next month.</i>
<i>hope</i>	<i>I hope to see you on Friday.</i>
<i>want</i>	<i>They want to visit us next summer.</i>