

We also use *be on the point of* and *be on the verge of* to talk about the near future. These both mean that something is very close to happening. They can be followed by either an *-ing* form or a noun:

*Don't provoke your little brother. You can see he's **on the point of losing** his temper.*
*Because of the erosion of their habitats, some species **are on the verge of extinction**.*

Some adjectives contain the idea of 'in the near future', e.g. *imminent*, *forthcoming*, *impending*. We tend to use these adjectives in more formal, often written, English:
*A decision from the judges is **imminent** and we expect further news within the hour.*

! We use *impending* only in attributive position, i.e. before the noun:

✗ *The sensation of doom was impending.*

✓ *No one could shake off the sensation of impending doom.*

! We do not usually use time adverbials (e.g. *in an hour*) with the expressions above:

✗ *The President is on the point of signing an historic deal in just one hour.*

✓ *The President is on the point of signing an historic deal.*

4 Expressions of probability and certainty

We use *be likely/unlikely to* + infinitive to say that something in the future is probable/improbable:

*The payment is **likely to take** ten days. Please contact us if it does not arrive within that time.*
*They're **unlikely to arrive** before six. The traffic is always awful on Fridays.*

We can use *be sure (bound/certain) to* + infinitive to say that something is going to happen or should have been expected:

*The new timetable is **sure to annoy** some of the teachers when they see it.*

*Your application is **bound to fail** if you don't get the divisional director's approval.*

FORMALITY CHECK In the negative we can put *not* after the adjective, but this can sound quite formal, so in casual speech we sometimes reformulate it:

*The electrification of the west coast rail line is **certain not to be completed** before 2025.*

[Don't worry about Dad – he's **sure not to find out** about the party.]

✓ *Don't worry about Dad – I'm **sure he won't find out** about the party.*

! We can use *be sure to* and *be certain to* as imperatives but NOT *be bound to*:

✗ *~~Be bound to give me a call when you arrive at the hotel.~~*

✓ ***Be sure/certain to give me a call when you arrive at the hotel.***

5 Verbs with future meaning

Some verbs contain an implied future in their meaning; we understand that they relate to the future, even though we do not use a future form:

VERBS	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLES
<i>decide hope promise swear intend (also + -ing)</i>	verb + to + infinitive	<i>I hope to see everyone at the next Open Day.</i> <i>Do you swear never to reveal this secret?</i> <i>He intends to retire/retiring next year.¹</i>
<i>anticipate predict envisage</i>	verb + noun/ -ing form	<i>We anticipate congestion on all routes this weekend.</i> <i>They predict rain tomorrow.²</i> <i>Do you envisage making any policy changes?</i>
<i>arrange expect guarantee, plan undertake</i>	verb (+ noun) + to + infinitive	<i>We're planning a break to get a bit of sun this winter.</i> <i>We expect to promote trainees within three years.</i>

¹ The infinitive is more common after *intend* than the *-ing* form.

² We use *predict* with a noun or a *that* clause: *We **predict that it will rain** tomorrow.*

Some modal verbs usually express a degree of possibility in the future (► Units 31, 32):

*Such financing opportunities **may not be** so readily available in the future.*

*Rankin's latest blockbuster **might win** the Golden Dagger award for crime fiction.*

*Given their expertise and experience, the Swiss team **should triumph** in tomorrow's final.*