


We can use *will*, or the present simple, to talk about aspects of capacity or ability:

*The Olympic stadium in London **will hold/holds** 80,000 people.*

*This model **will do/does** 0 to 100 kilometres per hour in eight seconds.*

In speech, we use *will* (not the present simple) to describe an annoying habit or to make a criticism: *We enjoy going out with Frank and Carol, but they **will argue** in public!*

 We do not contract *will* when we use it in this way – we stress it:

X Geoff ~~ll leave~~ the lights on when he's last out of the office.

*✓ Geoff **will leave** the lights on when he's last out of the office!*

Similar use of present continuous ► Unit 20.2



Pronunciation ► 1.10

We often use *will/won't* to talk about inanimate objects:

*Whatever I do, my car **won't start** first time on cold mornings.*

4 Past habits and routines

We use *would/wouldn't* to talk about habits in the past (► Unit 21.5):

*Every lesson was the same: he'd **sit** down and get his books out, then he'd **start** giving us instructions. He **wouldn't greet** us or show any interest in us.*

In speech, we also use stressed *would/wouldn't* to criticise or talk about annoying habits in the past:

*When Alan was a toddler he **would cling** on to me whenever a stranger came into the room.*

However, if *would* is followed by an adverb, we often stress the adverb instead

*I miss Dad, even though he'd **always tell** me how to run my life!*

*My boss was awful: he'd **invariably find** something for me to do at five o'clock.*

Similar use of past continuous ► Unit 21.2

We can use *would/wouldn't* to talk about inanimate objects:

*The car **would never start** on winter mornings when we were in Sweden.*

5 Present and future willingness

We use *will* to express our agreement to do something. It means 'be willing to':

*Jim **will act** as referee today since Martin can't make it.*

We can use *will/won't* in the *if* clause of a first conditional to make a polite request:

*If you'll **take** a seat for a moment, Mr Franks will be with you soon.*

(= If you are willing to take a seat ...)

Requests ► Unit 36.3

We use *won't/shan't* to express refusal to do something:

*The Director's secretary **won't book** my flights. She says it isn't in her job description.*

6 Past willingness

We use *would/wouldn't* to show willingness or refusal in the past. We use *would* (positive only) to refer to general willingness (i.e. a habit):

*Dad **would always help** us with our maths homework.*



We don't use *would* to express willingness to do something on a single occasion in the past but we can use *would not* for refusal on a single occasion in the past:

X The tour guide was very helpful. She ~~would contact~~ the Consulate for me when I lost my passport.

*✓ The tour guide was very helpful. She **contacted/offered to contact/was willing to contact** the Consulate for me when I lost my passport.*

*✓ The shop assistant **wouldn't change** this jumper for me, even though I hadn't worn it.*