

▶ future forms

▶ tentative language

Did you know?

English has no future tense, since the form of the verb cannot be modified to express future time. However, there are over 100 different alternative ways of expressing the future! These include using modal verbs, e.g. *will*, *may* and other constructions, e.g. *is bound to*, *is on the verge of*.

▶ Grammar and practice
pages 124–125**2.3 Grammar** The future, tentative and speculative language**Review of future forms**

1 Work with a partner. Look at the *Did you know?* box and list as many structures as you can think of for talking about the future. Then exchange your ideas about the future events below.

- 1 your plans and intentions for work and study for the next few months (what *you're doing* and *going to do*)
- 2 what *you'll be doing* for Christmas/the summer holidays next year
- 3 a current news story and how you think it *will develop* in the future
- 4 the likely results of the next big political or sporting event in your country (what you think *will/won't* and *might* happen)
- 5 what you hope you *will have done* and *will have achieved* in your career and in your life by the time you reach retirement age

Recognizing longer future forms

2 The extracts below from journalistic texts contain examples of alternative future forms. Identify and underline the structure used to indicate the future. Mark the expressions as **C** (certain), **P** (probable) or **T** (tentative).

- 1 The disastrous results look bound to reinforce accusations that the US and British governments grossly underestimated the scale of the problem. **C**
- 2 Mortgage rates seem unlikely to be cut any time soon. **T**
- 3 Until recently workers in far-flung manufacturing facilities were not asked what they thought of the companies they were supplying. That may be about to change. **T**
- 4 Sayako Industries, recently voted the smartest company on the planet, is poised to take over its long-time rival, Venezia. **T**
- 5 Following a spate of appalling sales figures and a brace of profit warnings, INN-signia, the hotels to pubs chain, appears on the verge of collapsing. **T**
- 6 Biggleswade Cereals is expected to announce a major acquisition later this week. **T**
- 7 Last week's potentially fatal flu outbreak should not affect full-year profits, the Dorchester Group announced yesterday. **T**
- 8 Newcomer South-West Retail could just overtake veteran Sell-By Jeans in the lucrative teenage-to-twenties clothing market. **T**
- 9 It's likely to be an old-style battle between old and new. **T**
- 10 Traverse may end their blockade soon. **T**

3 Decide on the degree of certainty indicated by the future forms in the box. Put each one into the correct column in the table.

be poised to will probably be on the verge of be on the brink of may be set to
should be going to be bound to could be certain to

Almost certain (8 expressions)	Probable (3 expressions)	Tentative (3 expressions)
<i>be on the point of</i>	<i>be likely to</i>	<i>might</i>

1 Replace the expressions in the sentences in Exercise 2 with an appropriate alternative future form from the table which expresses the same meaning.

