

## TO THE TEACHER

## The Future

am/is/are Ving

will vb

am/is/are going to Vb

Lesson 11 is the last of what I think of as the "verb tense" lessons. \*

The other lessons in the book having to do with verbs are there to tackle some common modals and semi-modals that cause confusion. (have to, used to, would) One of the learning goals for the class that I teach is that students be able to use all verb tenses. X-Word grammar doesn't do this head on, but it does present the framework. I've attached the three main tools that I use in case you're interested. These are THE WRITING ASSIGNMENT (see box below), TIME EXPRESSIONS and the VERB TENSE PROGRESS CHART

If you need to teach verb tenses, you can look at the video "The Writing Assignment" on the [Activities](#) page. This expands on an elegant little diagram in the excellent X-Word-based *Get Healthy - Learn English: An ESL Grammar Text-Workbook* by Deborah Singer Pires and Susan C Khodabakshi (©2013 Cengage Learning).

English doesn't really have a future tense. We use three ways of talking about the future, but remember that many modals have a "future feel" to them. For example:

"Can you come to the meeting tomorrow?"

"I might need to take my daughter to the doctor."

**THE THREE FUTURE FORMS:****OVERUSE OF "WILL"**

There seem to be regional differences in deciding which future forms are chosen, and in casual communication there usually isn't a complete breakdown if a speaker uses "will Vb" when the listener would have used "am going to Vb." However, most of our students are in the habit of using "will Vb" for everything which can sound stilted or cause confusion.

American student: Mary is having a party on Friday.

ESL student: Will you go to the party?

American student: (Thinking) Does he only want to know if I'm going to the party, or did he just ask me out???

## TO THE TEACHER

**CONFUSION WITH GONNA:**

Some students shy away from "be going to Vb" because they don't understand "gonna" and/or they have been taught that it's **WRONG**.

**1. Understanding**

"gonna" is, of course, a reduction of "going to." Sometimes students don't realize that "to" is part of the package. "He is gonna to go."

Activity:

A little time on pronunciation and reduction can be fun.

On the board.

1) I'm going to go.                      2) I'm goin' tah go.                      3) I'm gonna go.

T models first. Read #2. Ask Which one did you hear?

Quickly indicate a "volunteer" who says one of the sentences. the other students vote on which number they heard.

**2. It's just WRONG**

If you think it's **WRONG**, good luck, because it is used constantly - our last four presidents have certainly used it (whether to sound folksy or because they didn't know any better, I don't know). If you watch English subtitles on the TV, they dropped the quotation marks around it years ago. So I teach "gonna" because that is what my students will **HEAR**. They can reply any way they want.

**BE VING FOR THE CLOSE FUTURE**

Most of us use am/is/are Ving for things that we plan to do today. We just throw a Koosh and ask each other "what are you doing" questions. What are you doing after class. Where are you having lunch? What are you cooking for dinner? and so forth.

In general, "will Vb" is used for predictions.

Yuki is really smart and motivated. I'll bet that she will get a good job.

"be going to Vb" is used for intentions

Yuki is going to start interviewing as soon as possible.

"be Ving" is used for things that are close in time and that you are pretty sure of.

She is working on her resume today.