

Talking about the future part II

The simple present tense is used to talk about future events that are part of official programs or timetables.

The college reopens on August 16th.

The train leaves at 6 pm.

When does the flight arrive?

The simple present tense is also used to talk about future in clauses beginning with if, unless, when, while, after, until, before, as soon as etc.

I will call you after I arrive. (NOT I will call you after I will arrive.)

We won't go out if it rains. (NOT We won't go out if it will rain.)

Let's wait till he finishes his lunch. (NOT Let's wait till he will finish his lunch.)

Present continuous tense

The present continuous tense can be used to talk about our future plans – things we are planning to do in the near or distant future.

I am going to Beijing tomorrow.

Father is arriving this evening.

She is getting married.

Students are advised to use the present continuous (not the simple present) to talk about personal arrangements.

We are eating out tonight. (More natural than 'We eat out tonight' OR 'We will eat out tonight')

Be to

The structure 'be + to-infinitive' is often used to talk about official plans and arrangements.

The Prime Minister is to visit France next month.

Note that 'be + infinitive' is used in a formal style. In newspaper headlines, be is often left out. Articles are also left out in headlines.

Prime Minister to visit France next month.