
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Grammar

Future continuous and **be + infinitive**



NB This is not a word-for-word transcript

Callum

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Callum.

Catherine

And me, Catherine.

Callum

Today's programme is about a couple of ways of talking about the future. The **future continuous** verb form and **be** plus the infinitive.

Catherine

So **you're to listen** carefully...

Callum

Good example!

Catherine

Thank you. Let's start with the future continuous. Here's an example. This time next week, I'll be sitting on a beach in Mallorca.

Callum

Lucky you! So, **I'll be sitting**, in the future continuous, is an event that will be happening at a particular time in the future.

Catherine

And I've already planned it. I used the time phrase **this time next week**. We can use other time phrases like ...**next year**.

Callum

Or **tonight**, for example. We can also use the future continuous to say how long we'll be doing something. So Catherine how long will you be staying in Mallorca?

Catherine

I'll be staying in Palma **for one week** before travelling around the island.

Callum

So Catherine used the future continuous to say she plans to stay in Palma for **a week**.

Catherine

That's right. Now we can also use the future continuous to say we'll be doing something while something else is happening... So, Callum, **while you're working** at the BBC **I'll be sipping** my cocktails by the hotel pool!

Callum

Yes, notice that we usually use the present continuous in the time phrase after **while**... Catherine said **while I'm working**.

Catherine

We could use **when** instead of while, and follow it with the present simple. Here's an example.

Rob

A taxi will be waiting when you arrive.

STING

Catherine

Today we're looking at the future continuous to talk about future plans.

Callum

But we use it for other things as well. For example, we can use the future continuous to make predictions. Here's an example.

Rob

Those clouds look very dark. It'll be raining soon.

Callum

Rob knows it'll be raining soon because the sky is very dark.

Catherine

We can also use the future continuous to say what we imagine to be true at the moment. Listen to this example.

Rob

You can't ring Abdul now! It's two o'clock in the morning in Dubai. **He'll be sleeping**.

Catherine

We don't know for certain that Abdul is sleeping, but it's likely.

Callum

Sometimes we use the future continuous in a question when we want to be polite. Here's an example

Rob

Will you be staying for dinner?

STING

Callum

We form the future continuous with **subject** plus **will** or **won't** plus **be** and the **-ing form** of the main verb. Here are some examples :

Rob

I'll be sitting by the pool.

I won't be taking any work with me.

They'll be arriving after midnight.

Catherine

Notice that we usually use contracted forms, so **I'll** ...and **won't**.

Callum

For questions it's **will** or **won't** plus **subject** plus **be** plus the **-ing** form of the verb.

Rob

Why will they be arriving so late tonight?

Catherine

So that's the future continuous. Now let's look at **be** plus **the infinitive**.

Callum

We sometimes use this to tell someone what they must or mustn't do. Here are some examples.

Rob

Students are to enter the hall from the back.

You're not to go out without telling me!

Callum

We often find this structure in more formal English, for example to describe official arrangements.

Rob

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are to visit Singapore next month.

Catherine

Or in media reports to say what will almost certainly happen. We form this structure with **subject** plus **be** plus the **infinitive with to**. Listen to this example.

Rob

A man is to appear in court later today charged with murder.

Catherine

For the negative it's **subject** plus **be** plus **not** plus the **infinitive with to**.

Rob

You are not to go to bed late tonight!

Catherine

And remember, we often use short forms like: **You're not** and **He isn't...**

IDENT**Catherine**

We're talking about the **future continuous** tense and **be plus the infinitive**.

Callum

So, to recap, we use the future continuous to describe plans at a particular time in the future or for how long we'll be doing something.

Catherine

We also use it for predictions...

Callum

And for polite enquiries and to say what we assume is happening.

Catherine

We use **be** plus **the infinitive** for future events which involve instruction or necessity.

Catherine

And for official arrangements or reports saying what will almost certainly happen.

Callum

Time for our quiz. Which is correct a or b. Ready?

Catherine

OK.

Callum

Number one. a) I work in New York next summer or b) I'll be working in New York next summer.

Catherine

It's b).

Callum

Correct. Number 2. a) Students are not to bring their cars to school. b) Students are not bring their cars to school.

Catherine

It's a).

Callum

That's right. Finally, number three. a) I'll be working hard while you relaxing in the sun. b) I'll be working hard while you're relaxing in the sun.

Catherine

It's b.

Callum

Correct and that's the end of the programme. There's lots more about this on our website at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar soon.

Both

Bye.