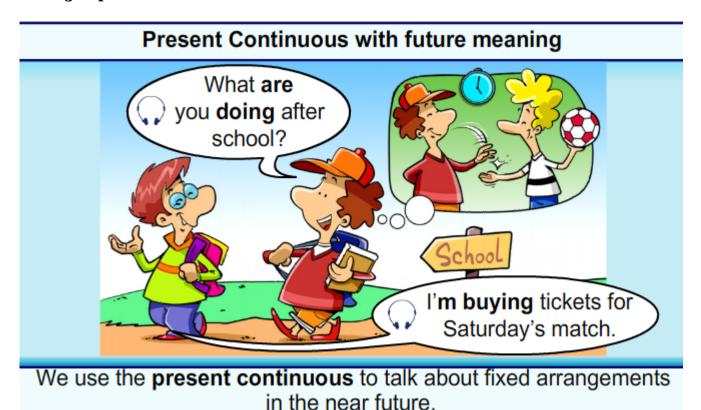


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Generally, we use the **Present Continuous** tense to talk about actions taking place now or around now. But English speakers often use the Present Continuous to talk about **pre-arranged plans or events**.



via http://elc-starters.blogspot.com/2015/02/grammar-present-continuous-future.html

When we use the Present Continuous with this meaning, it is necessary to add a **time reference** (*tomorrow*, *tomorrow* evening, *on/next Sunday*) so we know it refers to the future and not to the present:

• Jane is working at the moment (Present Continuous refers to present activity) but **in the evening** she **is playing** tennis (Present Continuous refers to planned activity in



future).

Note: We can often use '**going to**' instead of the Present Continuous to indicate future meaning.

- Nick **is spending** time with his family tonight.
- Nick **is going to spend** time with his family tonight.

How to form Present Continuous

Statements

To make the Present Continuous with future meaning, we use:

am / is / are + the '-ing' form of the verb (Present Participle) and add a time marker.

- I'm staying at home tonight.
- She **isn't working** on Thursday.
- We're meeting at two o'clock.
- John and Samantha are getting married tomorrow.

Negative sentences

We form the negative by adding '**not**' to either the full form or short (contracted) form:

am / is / are + not + the '-ing' form of the verb

- We're not having a meeting this afternoon.
- =We aren't having a meeting this afternoon.
- =We **are not having** a meeting this afternoon.
- I'm not coming to the party tonight.
- = I am not coming to the party tonight.

Questions

To form a question, we rearrange the word order, placing the verb 'be' before the subject:

am / is / are + subject +the '-ing' form of the verb

- **Are** you **going** to the concert tomorrow?
- **Is** your mom **joining** us for dinner next week?



When to use Present Continuous with future meaning

We often use the Present Continuous to talk about **future arrangements**. A **future arrangement** is a plan that we have decided and organised with another person, a group of people or a company:

- *I'm working* over the New Year. (this arrangement is between the speaker and his/her employer)
- We are staying with friends when we get to Boston.
- We're meeting Helen at 3 o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

It is not always necessary to state who the arrangement is with:

- *I am leaving tomorrow*. (I've already bought my train ticket.)
- So what are we all doing at Christmas?

We often use the Present Continuous to talk about things we *are about to start doing*. This is especially common with verbs of *movement*, such as *go*, *come*, *leave*, etc.:

- I'm going to bed now goodnight.
- Will you help me finish the housework? Sorry, I can't: I'm leaving for work now.

Certain verbs, actions or situations cannot be used with the Present Continuous with future meaning because they are not part of a **plan**, **an arrangement** or an **intention**. The **present continuous tense for the future** can only be used when an action or situation can logically be planned in advance:

- My leg's hurting tomorrow. Is NOT possible
- He's having an accident in March. Is NOT possible
- It's snowing next week. Is NOT possible

Here's a good video from To Fluency explaining the difference between 'will', 'going to' and Present Continuous for future actions and events:

See also:

Future with 'Will'

Future with 'Going to'