Future Time Expressions

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Hello! Dear students,
Till now you might have studied Present tense and Past tense in their various forms. Present tense has four forms. They are;

- Simple present
- Present continuous
- Present perfect

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Present perfect continuous
Likewise, in Past tense too we have:
- Simple past
- Past continuous
- Past perfect
- Past perfect continuous

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English language is an ever evolving language. Couple of years back most of the renowned English Grammar books also used to quote something as **Future Tense with its four usual divisions as made in the case of Present**.

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tense and Past tense. Of late this tendency has slowly but surely become archaic. Its place has been taken by something called Future Time Expressions.
Yes, today we are going to discuss Future Time Expressions.
You may be wondering why we should call it as Future Time Expression and not Future Tense.
Well, let me attempt to answer that. Mostly, it is a belief that ‘will’ or ‘shall’ are the two helping verbs which should be used invariably for Future tense and there ends the matter.
As I told you, it is just a belief! It is not true.
Apart from just using ‘will/shall’ to express future time, we have many ways to denote the same. Here are the ones, that I could bring for you.

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Before getting deep into it, let us take a look at Modal Auxilliaries.

They are:

- will
- would
- shall
- should
may
might
can
could
must
ought to
used to
need

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Among these 13 modals, there are 8 of them which can be used to express future events.

We make use of ‘will/shall’ simply to give information
about a possible event. That means to say such events may happen or take place.

British usually make use of ‘shall’ instead of ‘will’ in case of personal subjects. Whereas Americans do not make use of
‘shall’, but use ‘will’ indiscriminately. Now a days this usage has fast caught up and nobody really scorns at it now.

(The contractions I’ll, You’ll, etc., are used) These contractions used in a proper

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way make the spoken language fluent. For example:
1) I’ll tell you her name.
2) They’ll learn many things.
3) She’ll see you soon.
4) We’ll understand its meaning.
‘Will’ is also used in the main clause of a conditional sentence. For example:

1) They will help you, if you are good to them.
2) If you win the race, they will give you a bicycle.
3) If you study well, you will get good marks.
4) If you ring the bell, children will come out of the classrooms.

In such conditional sentences what one has to remember is ‘will’ has to be
used in the main clause of the sentence, whereas in the subordinate clause it is simple present tense verb structure.

**WOULD**

‘Would’ can also be used to show a probability.
The sentences where ‘would’ is used are less probable as compared to the sentences with ‘will/shall’. For example:

1) They would learn from their mistakes.
2) This would help you understand.
3) He would stop telling lies.

4) You would know everything.

The use of ‘would’ gives us an idea of what is going to happen, but it does not answer the question whether it is going to...
happen.

**SHOULD/MUST/OUGHT TO**
The trio ‘should/must/ought to’ help us to emphasize an action that should be carried out in future, which in many a case is a moral obligation. It means to
say, when either of these three modals are used, the statement becomes emphatic. For example:
1) They should learn from their mistakes.
2) You must help them.
3) She ought to paint again.
4) They ought to discourage spitting in public places.

*MAY/MIGHT*

These two modals can also be used to denote an event or action that is expected to be completed in future.
For example:
1) I may attend his wedding.
2) Many tourists may come here.
3) The beautiful princess might be courageous too.
4) Somebody might help you.
But again, ‘may’ is more emphatic than ‘might’, though both of them talk about a probability. When we say probability, it is for future, isn’t it?
Apart from these modal auxiliaries there are other ways also to express Future Time Period.

**SIMPLE PRESENT TENSE**

Yes, this verb construction can also be used to express an
action in the Future Time Period. Simple present tense is especially useful when we want to talk about an action that has been scheduled or certain to happen at a time in future. For example:

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1) The college vacations are in October.
2) Jenny finishes her course at the end of this year.
3) The train arrives at 7pm.
4) My bus leaves at 3 o’clock.

What one has to remember while framing such
sentences is that, there should be a Future time specification.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS TENSE

The present continuous verb structure is also used for future events arising from a present plan, programme or

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arrangement. For example:

1) We are distributing clothes to the urchins next Sunday.
2) They are getting the results this month end.
3) We are discussing this issue in the next meeting.
4) What are you doing this Vikasana – Bridge Course 2012
evening?
In this construction again, one has to be careful to specify future time.

**BE+GOING TO+INFINITIVE**
This structure is really a preset tense which is used to

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talk about future actions and events which are certain to happen. The structure is very common in an informal style, especially in speech. For example:

1) His son is going to be a journalist.
2) They are going to construct a bridge here.
3) We can see dark clouds. It is going to rain.
4) You are not going to play football in my garden.

This structure mainly is used when the future.
actions are obvious due to some present reality.

**WILL/SHALL + CONTINUOUS ASPECT**

‘Will/shall’ with continuous aspect, that means to say with ‘ing’ form of main verb can be used to give a meaning of

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temporary progressiveness to the future. For example:
1) I’ll be writing letters tomorrow morning.
2) Sahil will be training the cadets next month.
3) I’ll be seeing you one of these days.

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‘Be+to’ is a less common way of expressing future. Be+to infinitive signifies a plan for the future.

For example:

1) They are to address the gathering in an hour.
2) The movie is to release next month.
3) They are to help the children.
4) They are to launch the programme in the next month.
Thus we can use various tenses and the combinations to represent actions in future. This ability of Future Tense makes it a fascinating study. Whatever we have discussed today is but the tip of the iceberg. There is still very much

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present out there to learn in Future Time Expressions. In this session I could present before you the most important verb structures to be used. Hope you have enjoyed listening to whatever little I could bring for you.

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Thank you