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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Present continuous & 'going to'



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Finn**

Hello again. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Finn.

**Emma**

And me, Emma. Hello.

**Finn**

In today's programme we're looking at two ways to talk about the future.

**Emma**

Let's start with some sample sentences. Rob, can we have an example of a future arrangement?

**Rob**

Sure. Farid is meeting his cousin at the airport on Saturday.

**Emma**

Thanks Rob. The sentence **Farid is meeting his cousin at the airport on Saturday** describes an arrangement, made between two people, to do a particular activity, at a particular time.

**Finn**

Yes, and we can use present continuous, that's **subject** plus **am, is** or **are** plus **verb i-n-g** to talk about this type of future arrangement. Now, let's look at going to. We use **going to** with **an infinitive verb** to talk about future plans – things we intend to do. An example please Rob?

**Rob**

When I finish university, I'm going to spend a year travelling.

**Finn**

I'm going to spend a year travelling. That sounds like an exciting plan. And another please:

**Rob**

Simon and Ibrahim are going to spend the whole weekend playing football.

**Finn**

So Simon and Ibrahim have some interesting plans too. But, do they seem very similar to arrangements, would you say, Emma?

**Emma**

Well yes, they do. We can often use either the present continuous or going to for future plans.

**Finn**

So we could say: **I'm meeting some friends for a drink tonight.**

**Emma**

Or you could say: **I'm going to meet some friends for a drink tonight.**

**Finn**

But sometimes we can only use going to. Here's an example.

**Rob**

It's really cold. I think it's going to snow.

**Finn**

**It's going to snow.** That isn't a plan, and it isn't an arrangement.

**Emma**

But the speaker can say what's going to happen, based on the present situation – whatever is happening now.

**Finn**

And to do this, it's **subject plus am, is or are, plus going to plus an infinitive verb without to.**

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC learning English.

**Finn**

And we're looking at present continuous for future arrangements, and going to plus a verb to talk about future plans and arrangements – and things we know are going to happen based on the present situation.

**Emma**

That's right. So, Finn, are you doing anything interesting tonight?

**Finn**

Well, I'm taking my girlfriend to the theatre and the play is starting at 7 o'clock.

**Emma**

Ooh very good. What are you **going to [gonna]** see?

**Finn**

Aha! Emma I do believe you're asking me questions about my future arrangements and plans! You asked me a yes/no present continuous question:

**Emma**

**Are you doing anything interesting tonight?**

**Finn**

And you asked me a question word **going to** question:

**Emma**

**What are you gonna see?** You're quite right Finn, and I used a special short form of going to that we usually only find in informal spoken English: I said **gonna**. Gonna. It's very common in spoken English. **What are you gonna see?**

**Finn**

That's right. The long form is: What are you going to see?

**Emma**

And the informal short form is: **What are you gonna see? What are you gonna see?**

**Finn**

Well, I'll tell you later – but first, it's time for a quiz. So, question 1: Imagine you're at a football match. Your team is playing really well. Do you say a) I'm sure they're going to score a goal! Or do you say b) I'm sure they are scoring a goal!

**Emma**

And the answer is a) **I'm sure they are going to score a goal!**

**Finn**

That's right – based on the present situation – they are playing well – we can talk about a probable future situation with going to: **I'm sure they are going to score a goal.**

**Finn**

Right, number 2 - which is correct? a) We're gonna going by train. b) We're going go by train. Or c) We're gonna go by train.

**Emma**

It's c) **We're gonna go by train.** It's the shorter, spoken form of: We're going to go by train.

**Finn**

Now, number 3. Which is a correct future sentence: a) Hurry up – the train is leaving. Or b) Hurry up – the train is going to leave in ten minutes?

**Emma**

And the correct answer is b) **the train is going to leave in ten minutes.** Sentence a) needs a time expression to give it future meaning.

**Finn**

Yes indeed. Well, I'm going to leave in a minute, because I'm going to see a Shakespeare play with my girlfriend. See you next time, Emma!

**Emma**

Don't forget - there's lots more about this on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com).

**Both**

Bye!