
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Grammar

Future perfect continuous



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

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

Finn

And me, Finn.

Neil

Today's programme is all about the future perfect continuous tense.

Finn

We'll tell you when to use it...

Neil

How to form it...

Finn

And how it differs from the future perfect tense.

Neil

Let's start with an example of the future perfect:

Rob

This time next year, I'll have finished my course.

Neil

Here, the action - finishing the course - will be completed before a particular time in the future - this time next year.

Finn

OK. And now for the future perfect continuous:

Rob

In January, I'll have been studying for three years.

Neil

Here, the action – studying - goes right up to the specified time and will probably continue afterwards.

Finn

So, we use the future perfect continuous rather than the future perfect when we want to focus on the continuous nature of the activity and how long it will be going on for.

Neil

We often use the future perfect continuous with **for** plus an amount of time. So, in the earlier example, we had **for three years**.

Finn

Let's have some more examples of the future perfect continuous:

Rob

Tomorrow **I'll have been working** here for six months.

In July **we'll have been living** in Dubai for two years.

By the time the bus gets here, **we'll have been waiting** over an hour.

Neil

Notice that the last example didn't have **for**, as we don't always have to include it.

Finn

Now, we usually use a time phrase with both tenses to state the particular time in the future. These often start with **by** or **in**. Listen to these examples:

Rob

By 2020 the city's population will have doubled.

In June I'll have been unemployed for five months.

Finn

You can use **by** or **in...** with any future day, date, month, season or special day.

Neil

For the future perfect continuous, the time phrases sometimes begin with **in** or **on**:

Rob

On Sunday, he'll have been travelling for three weeks.

Finn

We often use **when** or **by the time** in time phrases with both tenses. Listen to these examples:

Rob

When your train gets in, we'll have been waiting for over two hours.

By the time you get home, the chicken will have been cooking for two hours.

By the time you get back, we'll have had dinner.

Finn

Notice that **when** and **by the time** are followed by a verb. This verb is in the present simple, not the future.

Neil

Now, as well as predicting future events and situations, we can also use the future perfect and future perfect continuous to say what we imagine might or might not have happened:

Rob

They **won't have arrived** yet. They only left twenty minutes ago.

Sam didn't come home last night. **He'll have been working** all night to finish his report.

Neil

In the first example, we assume that they haven't arrived yet, based on the knowledge that they only left 20 minutes ago.

Finn

And in the second example, we imagine that Sam has been working all night because he didn't come home last night.

Neil

We form the future perfect with **subject plus will or won't plus have** and the **past participle** of the main verb.

Rob

By the summer **I'll have finished** all my exams.

The film **won't have started** yet.

Finn

For the future perfect continuous, it's **subject plus will or won't plus have plus been plus the present participle**.

Rob

They **won't have been watching** the match as they are on holiday.

Neil

For future perfect questions, it's **will or won't plus subject plus have plus the past participle**.

Rob

Will you have managed to read all the reports by this afternoon?

Neil

Asking questions in the future perfect continuous is more usually done with question tags, so the order is the same as for statements.

Rob

He **won't have been working** all day, will he?

Finn

Question words can also be used in which case it's **will** plus **subject** plus **have** plus **been** plus **present participle**.

Rob

What will they have been talking about?

IDENT

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Finn

We're talking about the future perfect continuous tense.

Neil

To recap, we use the future perfect continuous to talk about something that will be going on at a particular time in the future...

Finn

Or to say what we assume has or hasn't already happened.

Neil

Now it's time for our quiz. Which is correct a or b. Are you ready?

Finn

Let's go.

Neil

Number one. a) It's only six o'clock. They won't have arrived yet. b) It's only six o'clock. They won't have been arriving yet.

Finn

And this one is a).

Neil

Correct. Number two. a) On Tuesday I'll have been worked here for two years. b) On Tuesday I'll have been working here for two years.

Finn

And this one is b).

Neil

That's right. Finally, number three. a) When you will visit, we'll have been living here for six months. b) When you visit, we'll have been living here for six months.

Finn

And this one is b) as well.

Neil

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

Both

Bye.