**Differences between the uses of “will” and “going to”.**
*(Guided Discovery Grammar Exercise)*

Use the following words to fill the spaces below. Write one answer for each space.

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habitual actions / won't / I'll take / unusual / going to / Will / plans / will / will / predictions / infinitive / speaking / won't / refusals / will / it's going / requests / deductions / won’t / present
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"Will" is a modal auxiliary. It always has the same form with all persons. The negative "will not" is contracted to 1.____________.

"Going to" is an auxiliary that can be used in front of the 2.____________ to express future. It always combines with the verb "to be".

"Will" and "going to" can be used to talk about 3.____________

The world will be a better place in twenty years time.

In the future, people are going to have cars that can fly.

What do you think 4.____________ happen at the end of the film?

I think it's 5.____________ rain a lot this winter.

But when we make a prediction based on evidence we experience in the 6.____________. We prefer "going to":

Look at that helicopter! 7.____________ to land in the field!

Can you see those black clouds? It's going to rain soon.

We also prefer "going to" when talk about decisions already made, or 8.____________:

I'm going to buy some new trousers tomorrow.

We're going to start eating more salads next month.
"Will" is preferred when we make a decision at the time of
9. ____________.

"Did someone knock at the door?" "Yes, I'll open it."

"Have you decided yet?" "Mmm, I know. 10. ____________ these ones."

"Will" is also the best choice for promises and intentions:

"You won't leave me, will you?" "No, of course I
11. ____________ ."

Don't worry, Mary. I'll take the car to the garage for you.

We use "won't" when we talk about 12. ____________ . This can refer to people or objects that do not want to do what we want them to do.

I've told him hundreds of times but he won't take his scarf when he goes out.

"The computer won't switch on!" "Of course, it 13. ____________ . You haven't plugged it in!"

"Will" is also preferred when we talk about 14. ____________ and we don't like what somebody does or we think what they do is 15. ____________

She'll go off and play squash every evening and leave me to look after the children.

Cuckoos 16. ____________ often lay their eggs in the nests of other birds.

We prefer "will" when making 17. ____________ about what is happening in the present somewhere else:

It's not worth going to the football stadium now. It 18. ____________ be full.

"Going to" isn't used when we make polite 19. ____________ to people in a formal way:

"I'm afraid there are a lot of people waiting. 20. ____________ you wait in the queue, please?"
Guided discovery for learners of English.

Teacher’s notes.

“Will” and “going to” (answers).
Time for activities: 45 mins. approx.
Level: intermediate (revision).

Answers
1. won’t
2. infinitive
3. predictions
4. will
5. going to
6. present
7. It’s going
8. plans
9. speaking
10. I’ll take
11. won’t
12. refusals
13. won’t
14. habitual actions
15. unusual
16. will
17. deductions
18. will
19. requests
20. Will

It’s probably true to say that confusing “going to” and “will” does not normally cause a breakdown in communication. Our concern here is with “correctness” and helping students to speak without sounding too “foreign”.

Oral activity:

A common mistake that stands out is the use of “will” for predictions based on a reaction to seeing the evidence: “Look at that helicopter! It’s going to land in the field!” (It will land…). We should choose “going to” in these situations. However, we can also give our own opinions (predictions) while commenting on a scene. So then someone could say: “No, I don’t think it will land. It’s too dangerous.” or, “No, I don’t think it’s going to land. It’s too dangerous”.

Give each student a blank piece of paper. Ask them to draw a quick and simple picture illustrating an action. Tell the students that, if possible, draw the picture so that it seems something is about to happen. They don’t write any words on the paper.

The students could sit in a circle or be arranged in some way so that the papers can be passed from one student to the next in a circular fashion. Students work in pairs. All students pass their picture to the left. As each pair receives a new drawing, one student says: eg. “Look! The dog is going to bite the boy.” The other student then replies with another opinion or agrees. He/she may use: “I think” or “In my opinion” plus “will” or “going to” form. They then pass the drawing on and receive another one. Answers should vary from one pair to the next as they will probably interpret the (bad) drawings in different ways.

eg. “Look! The dog is going to bite the boy.” “No, I think he’ll (he’s going to) escape to his bedroom.”

Enjoy the lesson!