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CHAPTER 6

THE HELPING VERB WILL IN FUTURE TENSE VERB PHRASES

English verbs have a distinct form to show past tense. For regular verbs, the past tense is formed by adding *ed* (or *d*) to the base verb. But English verbs do not have a distinct form to show future tense. Instead, the helping verb *will* is placed before the base form of the verb to indicate future tense. Compare these sentences.

Doris attends college.
Doris will attend college.

The first sentence makes a statement about the present. The second sentence makes a statement about the future.

Will is called a helping verb. A **helping verb** is a word used with a main verb to extend its meaning. The pair of words *will attend* is a **verb phrase**. A **phrase** is two or more words used together to play some role in a sentence. When the helping verb *will* precedes a main verb, the base form of the main verb is always used. This is true whether the subject of sentence is singular or plural.

Singular Subject: An architect will design our new home.
Plural Subject: Two architects will design our new home.

Try this sample exercise.

SAMPLE EXERCISE

Instructions: Rewrite this sentence so that it makes a statement about the future.

A woman walked from California to New York.

Answer: _____

Answer Explanation: The original sentence used the past tense verb *walked*. To write a sentence about the future, the helping verb *will* must be added before the base form of the main verb. The base form of *walked* is *walk*. Therefore, here is the answer:

A woman will walk from California to New York.

Use similar steps in answering the following exercises.

EXERCISES

Instructions: Rewrite each sentence so that it makes a statement about the future.

- Present:** Sheila plays volleyball for her high school team.
Future: _____
- Present:** Tigers live in this area of the zoo.
Future: _____
- Present:** The mall closes at 6 p.m. today.
Future: _____
- Past:** Bessie bought Larry's motorcycle.
Future: _____
- Past:** Carol flew cargo planes in the Air Force.
Future: _____

Other Ways to Write About the Future: Adding the helping verb *will* before a main verb is one way to make a statement about the future. Here are two other ways:

- Use a form of the phrase *is going to*.
Bob is going to visit Germany.
- Use the present tense form of the verb and a word or phrase referring to the future.
Bob goes to Germany on Tuesday.
Tomorrow I graduate.

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