Futurity

Reflect:

1 How did you learn about future forms in English? Did you learn a future 'tense'? If so, how was this expressed?

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2 How do you help yourself to remember the way different future forms are used? Do you have any 'rules' to help you remember?

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3 In your experience, which future forms do students find most difficult?

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4 Look in a coursebook you're using or have used in the past. Do you like the way it teaches future forms? Why (not)?

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Discuss:

If you have someone to discuss with, compare your answers. If any are different, think about why.

Explore:

1 How many functions of *will* can you think of? Think of an example for each one.

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2 How do the different future forms affect the meaning in each of these pairs of sentences?

a. I'll make a cup of tea.
I'm going to make a cup of tea.

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b. She's going to start school next year.
She's starting school next year.

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c. Hurry, the train is about to leave!
The train leaves at 8.52.

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d. I think Germany will win the World Cup.
England are going to win the World Cup!

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e. Are you going to the shop on your way home?
Will you be going to the shop on your way home?

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3 Change this sentence using as many different future forms as you can. How does the meaning change each time?

We're going to get there early.

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4 To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Why (not)?

'Students don't need to know all the different ways of expressing future time. They'll just be confused. It's better to simply teach them *will* and a set of adverbs that they can use to show how certain they are.'

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'You can't really teach future forms. It's better to expose students to their authentic use and encourage them to hypothesize about how they're used.'

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Answers:
'Explore', Ex 1 (suggested answers):
predictions, offers, requests, instant decisions
Ex 2:
a: The first is an offer, the second is expressing an intention.
b: The first is a plan/intention, the second shows that it's been arranged.
c: The first describes an event that's going to happen very soon, the second describes a fixed event in the future which we have no control over.
d: The first is a personal prediction. In the second, there's some evidence, e.g. they're winning by several goals in the final.
e: The first asks about a fixed plan. The second is more polite/less imposing, so it sounds less like a request.
Ex 3 (suggested answers):
We will get there early.
We'll be getting there early.
We plan to get there early.