

General

There are lots of future tenses in English. The difference between them is often in the idea of time. Below are two tenses that are very useful for academic writing.

Future continuous

Use it to describe events/activities which go on **throughout a future period**¹. You often give this period, eg 'in 2008', 'in the third part of this essay'.

This is a formal, neutral future tense. It is an ideal tense for using in your thesis statement.

Future perfect

Use it to describe events/activities which will be **finished by a future period**². You often give this period eg 'by 2008', 'by the third part of this essay'.

This is a 'past in the future' tense. It is a useful tense for making predictions about key moments in the future.

Compare sentences

Look at some examples of similar sentences. These should help you see this different idea of time.

Focus

You use future continuous to focus on ongoing things, like a diary. You use the future perfect to focus on finished things, like a business plan.

Similar tenses

The future continuous can be very similar to the present continuous for arrangements (ie will be opening = is opening). The future continuous just sounds less personal, more formal.

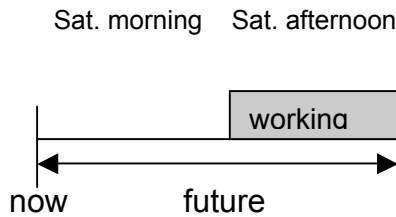
The future perfect can be similar to the present perfect, but obviously focuses on the future, not the present. (ie will have spent = has spent)

FUTURE CONTINUOUS

Events/activities...

..throughout a future period

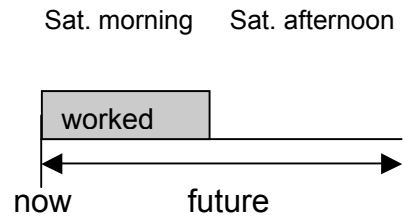
I will be working on Saturday, afternoon¹.



FUTURE PERFECT

..finished by a future period

I will have already worked 4 hours by Saturday afternoon².



Compare sentences

We will be sending the cheque next Monday¹.

They will have received the cheque by next Tuesday².

In the second part of my talk¹, I'll be focusing on solutions.

By the end of my talk², I'll have demonstrated that we can make improvements.

Focus

Diary

Thurs	Fri	Sat
Tom-lunch	Flight BA23 to Miami	Hilton

He will be flying to the States on Friday¹.

Business plan

Projection 2008
location – new offices in China growth – 3% annually sales – 1 million units

The company will have sold 1 million units by 2008².

Similar tenses

He will be opening the new shop next week.
[similar to] He is opening the shop next week.

He will have spent £10 000 on advertising.
[similar to] He has spent £10 000 on advertising.