



All Ears English Episode 201:

Finally, Solve Your Confusion with 'Will' and 'Going To'

Lindsay: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 201: "Finally, Solve Your Confusion with 'Will' and 'Going To'."

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Welcome to the All Ears English Podcast, where you'll finally get real, native English conversation with your hosts, Lindsay McMahon, the 'English Adventurer' and Gabby Wallace, the 'Language Angel', from Boston, USA.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: You're still making this mistake and it's so bad that you're even making your English teachers speak worse English. Find out in this episode how to tell the difference between 'will' and 'going to'.

[Instrumental]

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[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Hey, guys. Remember your English is a Porsche and if you wanna (want to) keep tuning up your Porsche, if you wanna (want to) know all of the TOP 15 FIXES today, go straight to AllEarsEnglish.com/TOP15. And you can get that in a free e-book right away.

[Instrumental]

Gabby: Hey, Lindsay. What's up?

Lindsay: Hey, Gabby. Not much. What are you, (uh), what are you gonna (going to) do tonight?

Gabby: (Um), well, actually I'm having a really hard time with something on my computer and I was wondering, will you help me for a minute?

Lindsay: (Um), actually I don't think I can help you because I'm not very technologically advanced, but my brother, on the other hand, he knows tech and I think he'll, I think he'll help you. (You know), if I connect you guys I'm pretty sure he'll help you.

Gabby: Okay, cool.

Lindsay: So...

Gabby: That's awesome.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: I appreciate that. (Um), what are you going to do tonight?

Lindsay: Tonight I'm gonna (going to) go out and, (uh), enjoy the evening.

Gabby: Oh.

Lindsay: I'm gonna (going to) go out for dinner tonight. Yeah, with a friend of mine.



Gabby: Well, since I can't get any help with my computer tonight I'll join you.

Lindsay: Okay, but you'll have to fly back to Boston, Gabby. Aw.

Gabby: (Uh), it's just an example.

Lindsay: Okay.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: So guys, today we are here with Number 6 of our TOP 15 FIXES, right Gabby?

Gabby: Yeah, that's right Number 6: 'will' versus 'going to'.

Lindsay: Oh my God, I hear this mistake a lot.

Gabby: I know.

Lindsay: I hear this all the time. Listen to this, "This weekend I will go to the beach."

Gabby: Oh, (go-). It's kinda (kind of) painful to hear.

Lindsay: It's painful.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: The problem is guys it just doesn't sound natural.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: What is the problem with that Gabby? What's the problem? I just talked about my plans for the weekend and I used 'will'.

Gabby: Yeah, 'will' is to talk about the future and the weekend is in the future so why not? Well, I'll tell you why not. 'Will' is making it sound like some grand important plan or dream, not even a plan, but a dream. You dream that someday in the distant future you'll go to the beach and it's like, what? It's not that big of a deal guys.

Lindsay: Right guys. So when I open up my calendar I still use – I don't use Google calendar yet, I know you do Gabby.



Gabby: Oh my gosh, all the time.

Lindsay: I still use the old-fashioned, (like), planner, the...

Gabby: Yep, yep, on paper.

Lindsay: ...but when I open up my planner I see what I'm gonna (going to) do next week. Next week I'm gonna (going to) have a meeting at two on Tuesday with Gabby and then I'm gonna (going to) have...

Gabby: Yep, yep.

Lindsay: ...another recording session with Gabby again.

Gabby: So do you just see in your planner, Gabby, Gabby...

Both: ...Gabby, Gabby, Gabby.

Lindsay: And a few other things here and there. Those are the things that I'm 'going to' do next week, not that I 'will' do because those are plans that are specific in the immediate future.

Gabby: Yeah, exactly and so one quick little side point, Lindsay is saying in her week, in her upcoming work week, she's 'going to' do these things. She's 'going to' meet with me, but she also said, "I'm 'gonna' (going to) met with Gabby." So...

Lindsay: Right.

Gabby: ...if we speak more quickly, in a more natural way, 'going to' becomes 'gonna'.

Lindsay: Yeah, and also to go back to 'will'...

Gabby: (Hm).

Lindsay: ...there's some trigger words that we can always use 'will' with.

Gabby: Oh.



Lindsay: For example, (right), there's some awesome triggers here, for example, "Maybe..."

Gabby: (Um).

Lindsay: "...I'll have lunch at the café today when we finish...."

Gabby: So that's, that's an example of something that you just decided, (right), or you...?

Lindsay: That's right.

Gabby: ...you just...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...thought of. Maybe you didn't even decide it yet, but you just thought of it. The thought just entered your mind, right?

Lindsay: Yeah. So I think the...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ... best way to think of this is when did the decision get made? Is the...

Gabby: (Um-hm).

Lindsay: ...decision being made about your action during the conversation?

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Right, "Oh, maybe I'll go to the café?" or has the decision already been made...

Gabby: Yes.

Lindsay: ...about your future plans for the weekend?

Gabby: Right. If the decision has already been made then we use 'going to'. You have your plan. So I really like that when you decide something spontaneously, in the moment, you use 'will'. There's also some other trigger words that you reminded me of just now, Lindsay. You said, 'Maybe



I'll...' You could also say, 'I wonder if I'll...' So here you're, you're kind of brainstorming.

Lindsay: (Um).

Gabby: You're thinking, you're dreaming a little bit, "I wonder if someday I'll..." I don't know, a common one is, "I wonder if I'll get married?" "I wonder if I'll have kids?" "I wonder if I'll win the lottery."

Lindsay: Yeah. That's perfect and, and, and so what you said right there is also – 'someday' is also a trigger word.

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: Right? So, "Someday I'll buy an island in the South Pacific."

Gabby: Yes.

Lindsay: Or, or, how about this one for a trigger word 'I think I'll'.

Gabby: (Hm). Yeah.

Lindsay: "Oh, I think I'll take a run." (You know)...

Gabby: Right.

Lindsay: ..."I'll take a run this evening. I'll run a 5k." "I think I'll run a 5k."

Gabby: And so that's a thought that just occurred to you.

Lindsay: Yes, but it's very common for people to make the mistake and they say, "I think I'm 'going to'..."

Gabby: Oh.

Lindsay: "...run a 5k." Right?

Gabby: (I mean)...

Lindsay: It's just...

Gabby: You hear it sometimes, but I think it's more common to say, "I think I'll..."



Lindsay: Yeah, and I think you actually hear it from native English teachers who start repeating what they hear from students.

Gabby: Totally, totally. There's another trigger word I wanted to mention because I think we've talked about it before, (um), actually in the TOP 15, 'I hope', "I hope I'll get a good test score," or "I hope I'll win the lottery." Right?

Lindsay: Yeah. I like that, I like that. 'I hope', 'I think'...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...'someday', 'maybe'. Okay. Those are all trigger words for 'will', but why? It's because the decision is being made in the moment or we're thinking about far off plans.

Gabby: Totally. There's one other way that we use 'will' that I wanted to mention and actually there's a really popular song that you should know that will help you to, (uh), remember and actually I used 'will' right there. (Um), it's a promise, a promise. {sings} Lindsay, I, I 'will' always love you.

Lindsay: Wow, that's so beautiful.

Gabby: Ooh. Almost exactly like Whitney Houston, right?

Lindsay: (Uh), yeah, you're really close. You're really close to Whitney's voice, pitch, everything. It's amazing Gabby.

Gabby: So guys this was a really popular song. It was a hit for weeks and weeks if not longer, (um), Whitney Houston's, "I Will Always Love You," (uh), part of a sound track of a movie in the 90s called, "The Bodyguard." So maybe you...

Lindsay: Ooh...

Gabby: know it.

Lindsay: ...that was such a great movie.

Gabby: I know.



Lindsay: Great soundtrack.

Gabby: So good. Listen to it. If you have a minute just listen to it and it'll help you to remember to use 'will' when you're promising someone. (I mean), you don't have to always promise that you're going to love someone forever. You could, for example, you could promise to help someone, like, "Oh yeah. Hey Lindsay, I'll help you with, (um), your homework," or, (you know), I don't know why that came to mind. You don't even have homework, but, "I'll..."

Lindsay: I don't have any homework.

Gabby: "...help you, I'll help you cook dinner or I'll help you...?"

Lindsay: Yeah, right.

Gabby: "...do something."

Lindsay: And, again, because you're making that decision right in that conversation...

Gabby: Yes.

Lindsay: "Oh Gabby I really, I'm struggling with my trigonometry homework." Thank goodness I don't have trigonometry homework – and Gabby says, "Oh, I'll help you..."

Gabby: Yep.

Lindsay: "...I was an ace at trigonometry."

Gabby: Totally. So same reason that you said before, I decided it in the moment. Exactly.

Lindsay: Yeah, exactly. So that's the key guys.

Gabby: All right, so to sum up 'will' versus 'going to', Lindsay, when do we use 'will'?



Lindsay: Okay guys so as we've said, 'will' is when we talk about when the decision is being made in the conversation, spontaneous decisions, right?

Gabby: (Um-hm).

Lindsay: Or things that are happening far in the future. So, "Someday I'll, (you know), get married...

Gabby: (Uh-hm).

Lindsay: ...hopefully."

Gabby: (Uh-hm), (uh-hm). Yeah.

Lindsay: Or, "I think this afternoon I'll have lunch outside on the patio."

Gabby: Yeah. So something you either decide in the moment, or a thought that comes to your mind in the moment. I love that. It's super clear to me when you think of how to use 'will'. You use 'will' when the thought comes to you like that. Okay.

Lindsay: Exactly. And 'going to'?

Gabby: 'Going to'. 'Going to' is for something that you've planned. So you thought of this action before having a conversation, before expressing yourself. So it's something maybe you, you wrote down in your planner or you made plans with your friends and now you're telling people about it and it's something that you're going to do relatively soon.

Lindsay: Yeah, exactly and just to sum up guys we wanna (want to) say one thing. It's just like we talked a few weeks back about the differences between, (uh), saying 'I have done' and 'I did'.

Gabby: (Um).

Lindsay: When we did that episode we talked about how natives move seamlessly between the two.

Gabby: Yeah.



Lindsay: It's not that one conversation uses 'I have done' and it's the same with this. A lot of times if you learn from a textbook you might have one lesson that focuses on 'will'...

Gabby: (Hm).

Lindsay: ...(right), and you, they'll give you an entire dialogue where you're only using 'will'...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...but I think that's ridiculous...

Gabby: Yeah.

Lindsay: ...because natives move very seamlessly between the two.

Gabby: Oh yeah.

Lindsay: Okay. Yeah.

Gabby: Back and forth, back and forth. So you have to be comfortable with that and to be honest there are exceptions to the rules. There are times when you, you'll hear people use 'I will' or 'I'm going to' when you thought it should be the other way. So you have to be comfortable with ambiguity, but to be honest I think these rules that we, we explained today are really good and...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: ...they're, they're a great way to understand how to use both 'I will' and 'I going to'.

Lindsay: Yeah. So what we would encourage you guys to do is take these rules that we've just pre-presented and use them as more of a hypothesis.

Gabby: (Um).

Lindsay: And go out and test and see if it's true. See if it's true in your (si-), in your conversations. The conversations that you hear native speakers having or



that you participate in and compare that against this hypothesis that we've presented you.

Gabby: Yeah. I love that. I love that.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Gabby: Thanks so much for the clear explanation.

Lindsay: All right. Thanks guys for listening.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: If you wanna (want to) put your ears into English more often, be sure to subscribe to our podcast in iTunes on your computer or on your smartphone. Thanks so much for listening and see you next time.

