

# Le futur proche vs Le futur simple



French has two common ways to talk about the future: **le futur proche** and **le futur simple**. Both refer to future actions, and in many everyday situations, either tense is possible.

The difference is not grammatical, but **how the speaker views the action**: Is it already planned or about to happen, or is it a neutral statement, prediction, or promise?

Tense	Structure	Example
<u><a href="#">Futur proche</a></u>	aller (present) + infinitive	Je vais partir
<u><a href="#">Futur simple</a></u>	verb ending added to the verb	Je partirai

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## 1. Le futur proche - “Going to” future (planned or imminent)

The **futur proche** is formed with aller (present) + infinitive. It is very common in spoken French, and it is used when the action is:

- already planned or decided
- about to happen
- felt as close or concrete

### Form:

aller (present) + infinitive

### Examples:

- Je **vais partir** dans cinq minutes.
- I’m **going to leave** in five minutes.
  
- On **va manger** à 19h.
- We’re **going to eat** at 7 p.m.
  
- Elle **va appeler** le médecin.
- She’s **going to call** the doctor.
  
- Qu’est-ce que tu **vas faire** ce week-end?
- What are you **going to do** this weekend?

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If the decision already exists in your mind, use the **futur proche**.

## 2. Le futur simple - “Will” future (neutral, predicted, or promised)

The **futur simple** is used when the future action is:

- a prediction
- a promise
- a general or neutral statement
- not clearly planned at the moment of speaking

### Form:

verb stem + future endings

### Examples:

- Il **pleuvra** demain.
- It **will rain** tomorrow.
  
- Je **t’aiderai**, ne t’inquiète pas.
- I **will help** you, don’t worry.
  
- Un jour, je **vivrai** en France.
- One day, I **will live** in France.

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- Le train **partira** à 8h.
- The train **will leave** at 8 o'clock.

The futur simple states what **will happen**, without focusing on planning or immediacy.

### 3. When both tenses are possible

In many everyday situations, both tenses are correct, with only a slight difference in tone.

#### Examples:

- Je **vais dîner** avec eux ce soir.
- I'm **going to have dinner** with them tonight.
  
- Je **dînerai** avec eux ce soir.
- I **will have dinner** with them tonight.

Both are natural. The **futur proche** sounds more immediate and conversational. The **futur simple** sounds a bit more neutral or formal.

Another example:

- On **va se voir** demain.
- We're **going to see** each other tomorrow.
  
- On **se verra** demain.
- We **will see** each other tomorrow.

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The meaning is the same. Only the speaker's perspective changes.

## 4. When the choice really matters

Some situations strongly prefer one tense over the other.

### Predictions and general statements

- Il **y aura** des changements.
- There **will be** changes.

Using *aller* (le futur proche) here would sound unnatural, because the changes are just a prediction that may or may not happen at some point in the future. The changes aren't yet clearly decided actions.

### Immediate or clearly decided actions

- Je **vais faire** mes devoirs ce soir.
- I'm **going to do** my homework tonight.

Using the futur simple is possible in this case, but it sounds a bit formal in everyday speech. In this example, I have clearly planned to take the action of doing my homework at a specific time.

## 5. Why this is tricky for English speakers

English uses "will" for:

- plans

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- decisions made now
- predictions

French separates these ideas more clearly.

English	Natural French
I will do it tonight. (an immediate decision has been made)	Je <b>vais</b> le faire ce soir.
It will rain tomorrow. (this is just a prediction, and it might change)	Il <b>pleuvra</b> demain.
I will call you later. (this is what I plan to do, but it might not happen because I've not really made a definite decision about what time I will call you)	Je <b>t'appellerai</b> plus tard.

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## 6. Simple way to remember

- **Futur proche** - “going to” - planned, close, already decided
  
- **Futur simple** - “will” - neutral, predicted, promised

In many situations, both are correct. What matters is not the rule, but how you imagine the future action.

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