

Future Perfect - Use

When do we use the future perfect tense in English?

Note: This is also called the **future perfect simple** tense.

As a general rule, we use the **future perfect** to talk about actions completed before or by a point in the future.

We use the future perfect for:

1. Actions completed before or by a specific future time

Note: Here we usually use the words **before** or **by**. These are similar, but not exactly the same.

Compare:

- before 7 pm = earlier than 7 pm (7 pm is excluded)
- by 7 pm = at or earlier than 7 pm (7 pm is included)

For example:

- I **will have finished** my work by 7 pm.
(My work will be finished by 7 pm.)
- He'll **have left** before tomorrow afternoon.
- Sophia **will have completed** her course by next year.
- They'll **have built** the new bridge by November.
- We **won't have had** dinner before 6 o'clock.
- **Will** they **have cut** the grass by then?

2. Actions completed before another future action

We can use the future perfect to emphasise that one future event happens before another. Here we often use **by the time** in the other clause.

For example:

- When you get home, he **will have cooked** dinner.
(Event 1: He cooks dinner. Event 2: You get home.)
- We'll **have cleaned** the house before our guests arrive.
(Event 1: We clean the house. Event 2: Our guests arrive.)
- By the time you hear this message, I **will have gone** to bed.
(Event 1: I go to bed. Event 2: You hear this message.)
- When we get to the airport, the plane **won't have landed** yet.
- **Will** everyone **have read** the email by the time the meeting starts?

3. Showing durations or amounts of something completed before or by a future point

We often use the future perfect to talk about the length of time ("how long") or quantity ("how much" or "how many") of something accumulated up to a point in the future. The point can be a specific time or a future event.

For example:

- In six weeks' time, the students **will have learnt** 1,000 new words. (US: learned)
- We **will have lived** here for six years in July.
- At 2 am, they **will have been** at the party for eight hours.
- How much money **will** you **have saved** by the end of the year?
- How long **will** she **have worked** here when she retires?

4. Predictions about something that will already be completed

For example:

- I think I'll **have bought** a house by the time I turn 50.
- I'm guessing it **will have stopped** raining when we get home.
- The movie **will have started** before we even buy our tickets.

Some time words and phrases that we often use with the future perfect:

- by (e.g. by 7 pm, by June, by next year, by this time next year)
- by the time + present simple
- by then
- by that time
- by the end of
- before (e.g. before 7 pm, before June, before next year, before this time next year)
- before then
- before the end of
- when + present simple
- in (e.g. in six weeks, in six weeks' time)
- how long
- how much
- how many