

An Effective Way of Teaching the Expression of Future Matters in English; Part One: Objective Uses of Simple Future Tenses

英語における未来表現の効果的な教授法の試み

第1部：単純未来表現の客観的応用

A. Stephen Gibbs

アントニー・スティーヴン・ギブズ

英語に未来に関する多数・多様な表現方法がある。日本における従来通りの英文法教授法が形態論を基本とするので、これらがまったく別々の項目として教えられる結果としてか、日本の多くの英語学習者は、自らが意図する意味内容に適した未来表現を選ぶのを困難とするようである。本稿では、相互関係によって結ばれていながら両立しない有限の選択肢から成り立つ、閉鎖された制度・体系として、その表現方法を学習者に改めて把握させる1つの新しいアプローチ、およびこの制度を概念構成体として学習者に発見・習得させる目的で筆者が用いる、相互作用による数々の学習課題を紹介する。学習者は、この制度を応用する習慣を漸く身につけると、自国語による、決して頼りにならない「定訳」に依存することなく、英語という言葉が提供する様々な表現方法そのものをもって、伝達しようと思う内容を直接に分析することによって、最も適切な表現を確実に選ぶのが可能になるようである。

Defining the problem

Most students enter tertiary education in Japan having learned their English from grammar reference books the fundamental approach of which is formal. That is to say, the simple past tense will be, for instance, presented with other past tenses, while the present perfect tense will be presented with 'other present' tenses. There is a certain and unfaultable logic to this approach; but that logic is not necessarily learner-friendly. For it takes a very perceptive learner indeed to realize for herself that the present perfect tense is one alternative to the simple past tense, that might be useful to her in expressing something that has happened in the past. Thus, most learners will think only of using the simple past tense, in cases in which more competent users of English would instead choose the present perfect.

As a result of this approach, learners tend to have in their heads a great number of *discrete*

items of grammatical knowledge, of each of which they will be found to have at least passive knowledge. The reason why they are so often unable actively to deploy this knowledge in order to meet their communicative needs seems to be that so many of these items have never been presented to them as mutually interrelated – as constituting limited closed systems comprising mutually exclusive choices – which is surely how competent users of English (consciously or unconsciously) apprehend them.

Unsurprisingly, the resulting sense of a chaos of bits of knowledge seems to produce an attitude to grammar that is both very common and unfortunately negative: grammar is so often subjectively perceived by learners as merely a bothersome, thorny hedge, to be either somehow surmounted or else blithely disregarded, rather than being apprehended positively, as what is often a very convenient tool for both *accurate* and *economical* communication. For, after all, how useful it is, to have a way of saying not simply that you did something ('I **put** your dictionary on your desk'), but also that, as far as you know, the situation resulting from your doing that should still be in existence ('I **have put** your dictionary on your desk [and so you should be able to find it there]')!

With regard to what we shall consider here – the expression of future matters – while */will ~/* and */be going to ~/* are indeed usually presented and explained together, the expression of 'a more-or-less flexible future schedule' by means of */be ~ing/* (as in 'My parents **are taking** me to Paris this summer') is usually grouped with other uses of the present continuous tense, the expression of 'a future schedule hard/impossible-to-change' by means of */be to ~/* (as in 'You **are not to speak** to your father in that way!') with other, semantically irrelevant uses of the infinitive form, and the expression of 'an inflexible future schedule' by means of the present tense (as in 'On Monday, the Foreign Minister **flies** to Paris') with other, again semantically irrelevant uses of the present tense. Nor is it usual for */be going to ~/* as used in 'This building **is going to collapse** at any moment!' to be related not to */be going to ~/* as used in 'I'm **going to go shopping** this afternoon,' to which it is semantically only indirectly related, but instead to 'Winter **will come**, and the ground **will be covered** in snow', to which it has a far closer semantic relation, differing only in the proximity of the event[s] expressed to the time of utterance.

Yet another result of this approach is an inevitable reliance upon 'equivalents' in the mother-tongue; and yet these 'equivalents' are *faux amis*, for they are at best only imperfectly reliable. One conspicuous example is the relation between */be going to ~/* and */ ~するつもりである / [suru tsumori de aru]*. In all of the Japanese-published secondary-level grammar reference books I have examined, these two are universally paired. And yet how close are they, one to the other? The native speakers of Japanese that I have consulted have all agreed with my own intuition, that */ ~するつもりである /* is semantically a *rather weak*, or *hesitant*, expression of future intent: and that it would be semantically appropriate to produce, say, the following utterance: */ 今年の夏、バリ島へ行くつもりだ*

が、実際、どうなるか分からない / [kotoshi no natsu, Bali-tō e iku tsumori da ga, jissai, dō naru ka wakaranai] [‘I (at least) *intend* to go to Bali this summer, **but who knows how things may not in fact turn out?**’]. That, however, is not at all the case with /*I’m going to go to Bali this summer*/; this is a very firm declaration of intent, and conveys no trace of hesitancy, or of readiness to accept that this intent may for some reason be thwarted. And therefore, though it is not ill-formed, and is possible, /*I’m going to go to Bali this summer, though who knows how things may not in fact turn out?*/ is semantically slightly odd, because the content of the second clause clashes with that of the first – one more appropriate choice being /*I’m sort of thinking of going to Bali this summer, though who knows how things may not in fact turn out?*/.

Obviously, at beginner-level, teaching through translation is inevitable. Yet, as Japanese and English are of course completely different systems of expression, at some point translation has to be bypassed, and mere formal apprehension has to be thoroughly reorganized in such a way as to be made efficiently usable for the learner. And in so many cases this can only be brought about by abandoning the formal/translation-equivalent approach, for instead a cognitive-semantic approach that presents certain items of grammatical (or semantic, as is done by the Longman *Activator*) knowledge as a closed system of choices, in the light of which a user of English needs to become able to analyze what she wants to communicate.

And this is the approach to teaching the expression of future matters in English that I wish to offer in this paper. It requires of learners some intellectual alertness; but, when presented sufficiently slowly, thoroughly, and above all interactively, I have found that it remarkably improves the degree of appropriateness of the choices that learners come to make in expressing future matters.¹⁾

Preparation for learners’ understanding and accepting the solution

First of all, it seems more effective to present this content not as ‘grammar’, but as a matter of better use of **vocabulary**. This is partly because the approach is indeed more semantic than formal; but a second advantage for most learners is that, while they have come to dislike grammar, their sense of need for greater accuracy of expression is a problem far more immediate to them.

Secondly, as a general basis for approach to choice of whatever tense, I myself find it essential first to (re-)introduce the difference between **state-verbs** and **change-verbs** (the latter being, in Japan, generally mis-called *dōsa dōshi*, puzzlingly meaning, ‘*action* verbs’; nevertheless, that is the appellation that most tertiary learners will most readily recognize). This is best done, I believe, by using the following three concepts: **continuance**, **start**, and **finish**, and in the following combinations.

A **change-verb** *always* contains within its meaning a **start** and a **finish**. But there are **two**

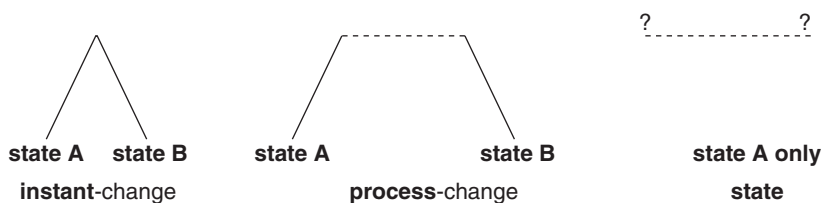
kinds of change-verb: 'I **wrote** a novel' differs from 'I **broke** your Ming vase' in the respect that *writing* takes some time, while *breaking* takes virtually no time at all. Thus it seems reasonable to suggest that there are two kinds of **change-verbs**: those, like *break*, that comprise in their meaning **only** a **start** and an almost simultaneous **finish**, and those, like *write*, in which the **start** and the **finish** are separated by a distinct period of **continuance**. The former kind of verb can be presented as an **instant-change-verb**, while the latter can be presented as a **process-verb**.

So how does one present a state-verb?

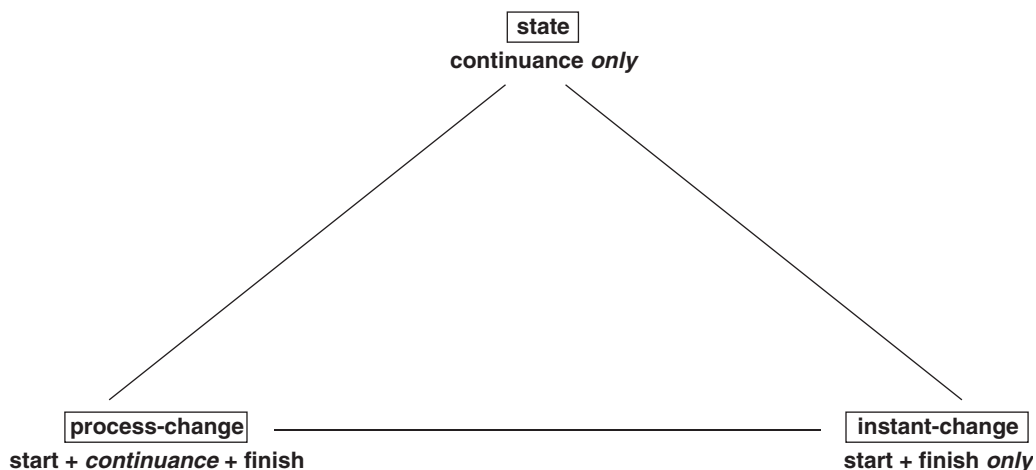
A state-verb expresses **only continuance**. That is to say, *I have four cats* does not make us think about when the Addresser began to live with her four cats; nor does it make us think about the eventual demise or disappearance of any of those cats.

This can be shown, on the board, or through printed material, in the following two ways.

①



②



This introduces the key idea of **expressive alternatives**; and is also essential to gently instructing learners in the appropriate use of such tenses as the simple present, and the present (or past, or future) continuative.

The learning-task that I have found it useful to use in activating this knowledge is as follows (Learning Task ①, below.) But I have also found it essential to precede this with some instruction as to

how to make accurate judgments, as follows:

There is one useful **test** for deciding whether a verb is a state-verb, a process-verb or an instant-verb: if the verb is '~', and it is possible to ask the question 'How long did **OR** does **OR** will it take to ~?' then the verb is a change-verb; if such a question makes no sense, however, the verb is a state-verb:

- How long did it take you **to write** your novel? [= **change**]
- How long did it take you **to break** my Ming vase? [= **change**]
- How long does it take you **to have** a cat? [= **state**]

And process-verbs can be distinguished from instant verbs by thinking about the answer to this kind of question:

- How long did it take you to write your novel?
It took me **about** [n units of time]. [= **process**]
- .How long did it take you to break my Ming vase? [= **change**]
It took **no time at all**. [= **instant**]
- How long does it take you **to have** a cat? [= **state**]
I do not understand your question.

Learning-task ①

It would be a good idea for you now to think about distinguishing between **state**-verbs and **change**-verbs. So here is a list of examples of use of verbs, all expressing various forms of **simple future tenses**. Please write, in the following boxes, whether they are **state**-verbs [= **S**], process-verbs [= **P**], or instant-verbs [= **I**]. The first example has been done for you.

Snow **will fall**, later this afternoon.

- 1) Since the President is now dead, the Vice-president **governs** the country, until a general election can be held.
- 2) You are **to tidy** your bedroom.
- 3) Her train **gets in** at 12:30.
- 4) That building **is going to collapse** at any minute!
- 5) He will **come** late to class, damn him!
- 6) This room **remains** untouched until the police arrive.
- 7) As far as I know, I **am flying** to New York, tomorrow.
- 8) Oh dear, I think I'm **about to faint**!
- 9) The captain of our soccer team **is to have** the privilege of meeting a famous

soccer star.

- 10) Tomorrow's edition of this program **is going to include** a special report on divorce.
- 11) I fear I **am never to see** my father again.
- 12) My daughter **will be** quite happy to drive you to the nearest station.
- 13) I **shall never trust** you again.
- 14) If you are not careful, I **shall certainly fall in love** with you.
- 15) When she gets her first paycheck, she **is going to treat** her mother to a delicious meal.
- 16) What **do we do** now?
- 17) You **will find** this problem rather difficult to solve.
- 18) We **are going to hope** that, sooner or later, our son will be released from prison.
- 19) He **is to drive** to New York, tomorrow, on business for the company.
- 20) And tonight Mr. Kite **is topping** the bill!
- 21) I will not **tolerate** such behavior in my subordinates!
- 22) The plane **lands** in fifteen minutes.

Next, it seems useful for learners to become familiar with the fact that all too many English verbs have (bewilderingly enough for the learner) both a **state-meaning** and a **change-meaning**; and the following is the activity that I use to drive this point home.

Learning-task ②

Unfortunately, what makes distinguishing the meanings of English verbs more difficult for the learner is the fact that a very great number of verbs have both a **state-meaning** and a different **change-meaning**. Here are examples of just 10 verbs, each of which is used twice; decide in which type of meaning each verb is being used.

- 1) Richard **worked** for a bank.
- 2) When he told me that he loved me, I **believed** him.
- 3) She **thought of** a solution to our problem.
- 4) The children used to **run up** to us.
- 5) I always **wished** our sports-teacher would just die in a traffic-accident.
- 6) She **is employed** as an airlight-attendant.
- 7) When the President comes in, everybody **stands [up]**.

- 8) After the tennis-match, she **felt** tired.
- 9) She **worked** at her computer all morning.
- 10) The Leaning Tower of Pisa **stands** at a slight angle to the vertical.
- 11) I **believed** him to be honest.
- 12) She **thought** I was stupid.
- 13) She once **held** a lot of shares in that company.
- 14) The wrestler let me **feel** his huge muscles.
- 15) At the wishing-well, I **wished** that I might find a kind and handsome husband.
- 16) The road used to **run** along the sea-coast.
- 17) He **lived** in Kyôto all his life.
- 18) After the accident, she **held** her daughter close to her body.
- 19) She **employed** all her strength to push the heavy car.
- 20) At the time, I **was living** in a tent.

As the next stage, it seems appropriate to point out that there are *simple* tenses – the simple past, the simple present (with its very different meanings for state-verbs and change-verbs) and various ways of expressing the *simple* future, as to be seen in the examples offered in Learning-task ①; and also complex tenses, such as those that involve the *continuative* aspect, or the ‘*perfect*’ aspect, or a combination of *both*.

The following teaching material expounds only various expressions of the simple aspect of future matters. From here onwards I shall present my ideas as I present them to my own learners. What I hope for is to be read with a binocular vision: one that both perceives the cognitive-semantic theoretical basis to this approach, which would appear to be sound, because effective; yet also apprises why I have so far found it most effective to teach it in this way.

Although the approach I take below may at first seem surprising, it was not until I began to present future matters in terms of *ownership-by-executant* that I found my learners starting to make the same choices of expression as a competent user of English would make; once learners have mastered and have become able spontaneously to apply to what they wish to express three basic categories – *ownership impossible*, *complete ownership*, and *partial/zero ownership* – this seems to provide them with a stable and usable criterion for analysis, which then makes relatively painless their mastering the details of subcategories of expression within ‘ownership impossible’ and ‘partial/zero ownership’, as outlined later below.

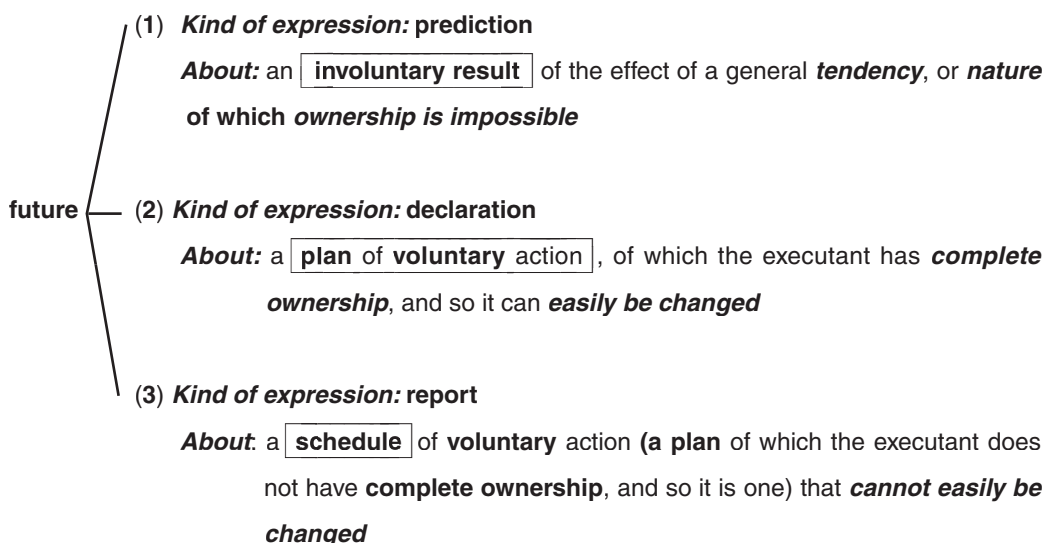
Expressing the future with the simple future tense

Of the three areas of time – the past, now and the future – the past and the present can only be **reported about** (or **denied**, or **questioned**), or **speculated about** (or a speculation can be either denied or questioned). The future, however, is more complicated, for it can be expressed in basically four different ways. Each of these expresses a particular kind of future state, process or instant-change, which differs from other kinds in terms of **type of cause**.

Furthermore, the type of statement that each way expresses also differs. In English, (and leaving **speculation** aside at this point) not only can an Addresser (1) **report** something (or deny, or question, a report) about the future, she can also (2) **predict** something (or deny, or question, a prediction) about the future, and she can further (3) **declare** something (or deny, or question, a declaration) about the future. And whenever she wishes or needs to express a future state, process, or instant-change, she must think about that state, process, or instant-change and **its type of cause**, and decide which act is most suitable: to make a **report**, to make a **declaration**, or to make a **prediction**.

We can show this in the following way.

Chart ②



I shall now explain the terms used in the chart above.

Kinds of expression:

(1) A **prediction** is an expression of a state, process or instant-change that, for some reason, occurs **in the future** and is **inevitable**: given the present situation, it **cannot be**

avoided. In Japanese, the following examples express predictions:

お祖母ちゃん、そろそろ危篤だろう。

雨が降りそうだね。

(2) A **declaration** here means an expression of something that *has been decided* by someone or some unified group of people; it informs us not just of a future probability, but that that probability is the result of someone's *intention*. In Japanese, the following examples express declarations:

俺はもう帰るぞ。

明君、来るといっている。

(3) A **report** is an expression of *fact*, without any extra meaning of intention. In Japanese, the following examples express reports:

明日、私がバイトすることになっているのよ。

近日、会議を開く予定です。

Voluntary and involuntary states and changes

One useful concept for thinking about how English expresses future matters is the difference between changes and states that are **involuntary**, and those that are **voluntary**. For example, a sneeze is an instant-change. Now, can you *choose* to sneeze? And can you choose *not to* sneeze? Usually, you can do neither. This means that sneezing is an example of an **involuntary instant-change**.

What about laughing? Unlike sneezing, it usually has continuance as well, and so it is a process. But can you *choose* to laugh? Well, if you are a good actor, you may be able to produce an **imitation** of laughter that is more or less convincing to other people. But you yourself will not **actually** be laughing; for **genuine** laughter is something that happens to bring (often enjoyable) relief to the person that laughs; but, when you merely imitate a laugh, this brings you no relief.

Again, can you choose *not to* laugh? You may be able to **hide** an impulse to laugh, and hide it more or less successfully; but, whether or not other people notice, **you** know that you want to laugh.

Thus, laughter is a response that you cannot (usually) choose either to have or not to have. That is to say, it is an example of an **involuntary process**.

What about having an opinion of something? Supposing you have a woman friend, and go shopping with her for clothes. She tries on a dress **that you think does not suit her**. However strongly your friend insists it suits her, and however little you want to disagree with

her, can you **choose** to think that it does in fact suit her? You cannot; and so */think that ~/* [= have the opinion, ~,] is an example of an **involuntary state**.

Concerning perception, */see/* and */hear/* are **involuntary** instant-changes, where as */look at/*, */watch/* and */listen to/* are **voluntary** processes. */Look for [something or someone]/* is a **voluntary** process; */find [something or someone]/* is an **involuntary** instant-change.

On the other hand, */marry/* is (usually) a **voluntary** instant-change; */write/* is (usually) a **voluntary** process; and */have [a pet]/* is a **voluntary** state.

Ownership of future voluntary states, processes and instant-changes

Another important concept that will help you to distinguish between **1**, **2** and **3** above is that of a **ownership** of **voluntary** states, processes and instant-changes.

If, for example, you make a plan to do something on Sunday, and on Sunday you are completely free to do what you like, so do not have to take into account anybody else's wishes or needs, then you may be said to have **complete** ownership of the future action that you have planned. That means that you can choose to carry it out, or to abandon it or, again, to change it, just as you like. In other words, that future action is **voluntary**, and you have **complete control** over.

If, however, you make a plan to do something with some seniors in your club, or your 'circle', then, because those seniors have more authority than you do, you will have only **partial** ownership of that plan: that is to say, if you alone then come to want to change the plan, actually doing this may prove quite difficult.

And if you have to take part in carrying out a plan that has been created entirely by your seniors, and for you alone to carry out, your seniors will have complete ownership, and you will have none at all – **zero** ownership! Although the future matter **ought** to be entirely voluntary, your lack of actual **ownership** has the effect of reducing your actions to involuntary behavior.

Other kinds of future events are ones of which no one, and no thing, can have ownership. For instance, if a tree is struck by lightning, is this the result of some plan? Or does the lightning **voluntarily** strike the tree? Or does the tree **choose** to be struck? No, it is a natural **accident**, of which ownership is impossible (unless you believe in a god, or gods). These kinds of future **involuntary** events can be called **ownership-impossible**.

Kinds of 'about'

(1) an **involuntary result** of the effect of a general **tendency** or **nature**

Let us take the example of a dog. Dogs are group-animals: unlike cats, they have an instinct that **makes them** live in groups. They also have an instinct that **makes them** follow and obey any strong leader. These instincts are part of the **nature** or **character** of every dog.

Dogs also have a hunting instinct. This means that most dogs enjoy running after balls that have been thrown for them, and bringing them back to the thrower. Yet it may also happen that some dogs are **not** interested in doing this. So we can call 'enjoying playing at hunting' a **tendency** that can be seen in many dogs.

Consequently, if you are given a little puppy, you know that, if you train it properly, **it is very likely** to grow up into an animal that enjoys living with you and your family, that obeys you when you give it simple commands, and that loves playing with things that are thrown, for it to chase and bring back.

And every time it obeys you, that obedience is an **involuntary result** of the effects of its nature. So you can **predict** the future result of giving your dog a command that it understands.

Because this kind of future event is **involuntary**, it can be called **ownership-impossible**.

kind of state, process or instant-change: **involuntary**; **ownership-impossible**

type of cause: the **nature** or the **tendency** of some person, thing or situation

kind of expression: **prediction**

This is **one** of the ways in which we can express a future state, process or instant-change in English.

(2) a **plan** of **voluntary** action, of which the executant has **complete ownership**, and so it can **easily be changed**

In many situations, people can **choose**, or **decide**, what to **voluntarily do** in the future. That is to say, they can make **plans** concerning **voluntary actions**, in order to meet their needs, or satisfy their desires. One person can make up her mind what to do, and later become the **executant** of her plan – by **carrying it out herself**. And a pair or group that is used to acting together and cooperating can make a group-decision about to what **voluntarily** to do, and later become the **executants** of their **plan**.

At the same time, one person, if she does not wish to, and does not have to, act as

part of a group, is **free to change** any plan that she may have previously made. This is because she does not have to take into account anybody else's needs or desires. That is to say, she has **complete ownership** of her **plan of voluntary action**.

Again, any pair or group that is accustomed to acting together and cooperating can often quite easily change a plan of **voluntary action** that they have previously made. Again, this is because together they have **complete ownership** of their plan.

kind of state, process or instant-change: **voluntary**, and the
result of free choice, based on **complete ownership**
type of cause: **intention**
kind of expression: **declaration**

This is **another** of the ways in which we can express a future state, process or instant-change in English.

(3) a **schedule** of **voluntary action** (a **plan** of which the **executant** does not have **complete ownership**, and so it is one) that **cannot easily be changed**

Now imagine that three **different** rock-bands, none of which is yet very popular, have decided to share a **single** live concert. They all have different schedules; the venue that they want to share also has its own schedule of concerts; and yet they manage to find just **one** evening when the venue is free, and none of the three bands has another engagement. So they reach a **consensus**, and **schedule** their concert for that particular evening. Their actually performing in the concert is a still **voluntary** act.

But suppose that one of the bands is suddenly offered the chance of making its first professional recording with a major recording-company; and that, unfortunately, the recording session coincides with the night of the concert. So that band wants to change the date of the concert. But the date of the concert has been agreed upon by **two** other bands, as well as by the management of the venue for the concert. Thus, the band that wants to change the original **schedule does not have complete ownership** of that **schedule**. So the date of the concert will probably prove very **difficult to change**.

Again, imagine that one professional boxer wants to challenge and fight another, who holds a title in the first boxer's class. Each boxer will have his own schedule, and his own team of trainers and seconds. The date of the boxing match can again only be decided by **consensus**; and therefore **each** boxer has only **incomplete ownership** of the **schedule**

of the match; once it has been decided, will be very **difficult to change**.

kind of state, process or instant-change: **schedule** of voluntary action, **not easy to change**

type of cause: **incomplete ownership**

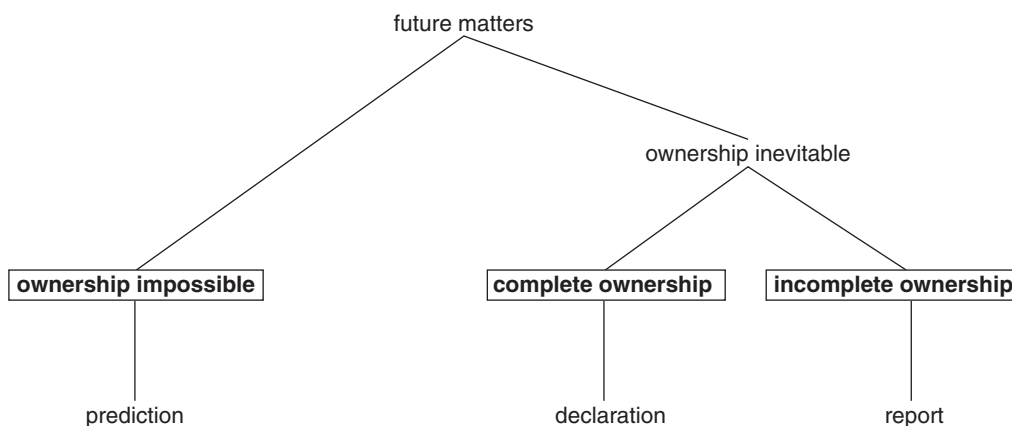
kind of expression: **report**

This is the **third** (and last) way in which we can express a future state, process or instant-change in English.

What you need to do next

Think about the following examples, and decide whether each expresses a **prediction of an involuntary result, ownership impossible**, a **declaration of a complete-ownership plan**, or a **report of an incompletely-owned schedule**. Write the results of your judgments in the boxes, using **P** for a **prediction**, **D** for a **declaration**, and **R** for a **report**.

The clearest criterion for thinking about this is that of ownership by the executant.



The first example has been done for you.

Snow **will fall**, later this afternoon.

An event like a change in the weather is subject to no one's ownership; and therefore this statement is a **prediction**.

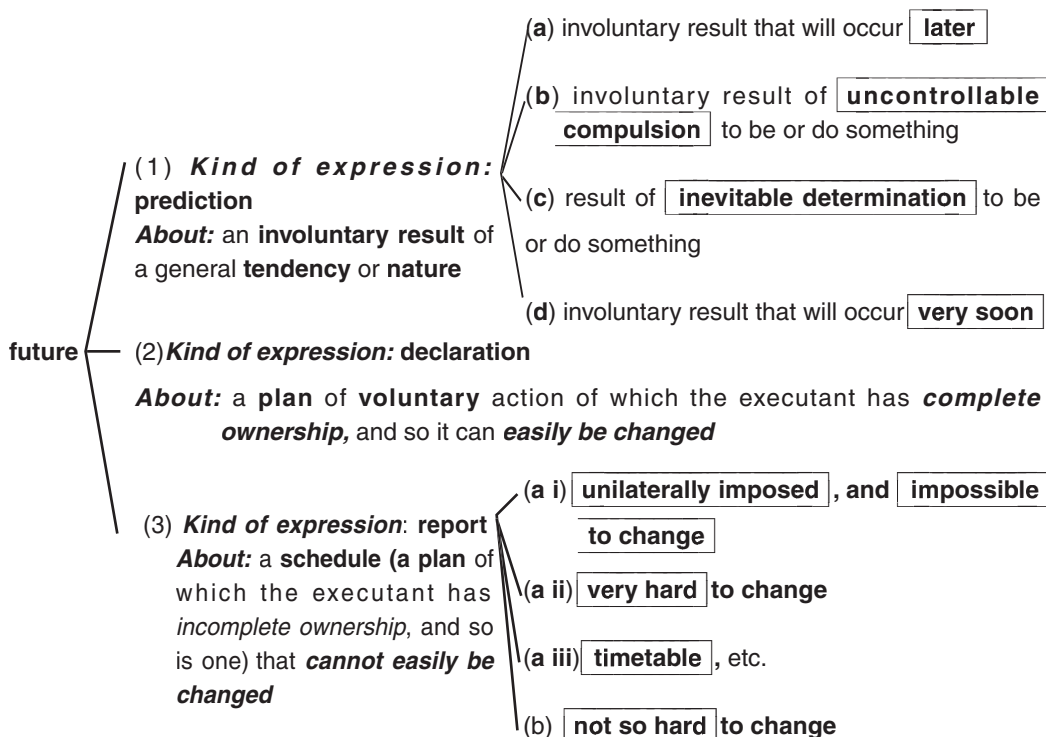
1) Since the President is now dead, the Vice-president **governs** the country, until a general election can be held.

2) You are **to tidy** your bedroom.

- 3) Her train **gets in** at 12:30.
- 4) That building **is going to collapse** at any minute!
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- 19) He **is to drive** to New York, tomorrow, on business for the company.
- 20) And tonight Mr. Kite **is topping** the bill!
- 21) I will not **tolerate** such behavior in my subordinates!
- 22) The plane **lands** in fifteen minutes.

Subcategories of these three expressions of future matters

Chart ③



Kinds of result that can be predicted

(1 a) involuntary result that will occur **later**

All events are in some sense inevitable, because they have **causes**. Some can be predicted because we understand the relation between cause and effect. If the cause is not a plan of some kind, it will lie in the general **nature** or **tendency** of someone, something, or some situation. And, in such a case, the effect will be an **involuntary result**.

For example, if you leave ice in a warm place, it melts: that is the nature of ice. So, if your mother has bought some ice-cream, but has forgotten to put it in the refrigerator freezer-box, you can **predict** that it will melt. Your mother has not left the ice-cream out of the refrigerator **in order to make** it melt; nor can the ice-cream **choose to** melt. So its melting will be an **involuntary result**.

On the other hand, well-frozen ice-cream takes some time to melt: the melting **does not finish immediately**.

Again, if you are on a ferry, sailing from Osaka to Shōdoshima, and on the way there occurs a storm that makes the ship travel more slowly than is usual, the delay in reaching

Shōdoshima will be an **involuntary** result; but this can be predicted **long before** the ship actually reaches the island.

These are both examples of **one** kind of **future result** that we can **predict** in English; and of course, being **involuntary**, it is 'ownership-impossible'.

(1 b) involuntary result of **uncontrollable compulsion** to be or do something

Each person or animal has an individual **character** – which is one part of his or her **nature**. And our characters may cause us to want to do something, or be something, that we have **no choice** about wanting to do, or be: doing or being that (or trying to do, or be, that) is **involuntary**.

For example, someone whose **character** is gentle and kind will often find herself or himself **compelled** by that character to sacrifice her or his own interests to those of someone else. Or someone whose life is not normally filled with other thrills may find herself or himself **compelled** to indulge in, say, gambling.

Because that person's character allows her, or him, **no choice** about what to do or be, and therefore she or he cannot control whether or not she or he does that thing, or is that thing, we can call this kind of compulsion 'uncontrollable'.

And such general **uncontrollable compulsion** will make that person or animal **involuntarily** do something, as its **result**. If you throw a ball while you are with a dog that is free to run, it is **very likely indeed** that the dog will run after the ball, find it, take it in its mouth, and bring it back to you. If a very kind person encounters someone who is in trouble, it is **very likely** that that person will try to help the one in trouble. And if you take a **compulsive** gambler to a race-track, it is **extremely likely** that she or he will try to place at least one bet. Thus, the **involuntary** results of such **uncontrollable compulsions** can be **predicted**.

This is **another** kind of **future result** that we can **predict** in English; and, even in the case of the compulsive gambler, though he may indeed **want** to gamble, he is not really **free** to choose whether or not to gamble; nor can anyone **make** him **stop** wanting to gamble; thus, his gambling is **involuntary**, and so 'ownership-impossible'.

(1 c) involuntary result of **inevitable determination** to be or do something

This appears to be a further development of **1 b**. Normally, **determination** is a matter of choice. But someone who has become a professional boxer, and spent years and years in painful training, will no longer feel that wanting to win the title of world-champion in his weight-class is any matter of his own **choice**: if he does **not** try to win that title, much of his life

so far will have been meaningless. Thus, his determination has by now **got beyond** 'complete ownership': it has by now become **inevitable**. So he will communicate that it is **inevitable** for him to try to gain that title in the future, by expressing that determination as '**ownership-impossible**'.

This is a **third** kind of **future result** that we can **predict** in English.

(1 d) involuntary result that will occur **very soon**

Let us imagine that you have caught cold, and the inside of your nose starts to tickle. You know that this feeling means that you are **about to** sneeze – **within the next few seconds or minutes**. This case is different from that of the ice-cream that your mother has forgotten to put in the refrigerator, but will take some time to melt. On the other hand, you cannot **choose** whether to sneeze or not: like the later melting of the ice-cream, your sneezing **very soon** is quite **involuntary**.

This is **fourth** kind of **future result** that we can **predict** in English.

The difference between **1 a** and **1 d** is this: in **1 d**, the cause **has already begun** to take effect, or **is just about** to take effect; on the other hand, in **1 a** it **has not yet begun** to take effect, or **is not acting very quickly**. (Later you will understand why I have numbered **1 d** not as '**1 b**' but, instead, as '**1 d**'.)

Kinds of schedule that can be reported

(3 a i) result of a schedule of voluntary action that is unilaterally imposed, and so **impossible to change (ownership-'unknown')**

One common type of this use is when a parent tells a child what to do, and wants to make it clear that the child may under no circumstance refuse to do this thing, and that the parent will accept no counter-argument. Thus it is really equivalent to the issuing of **an absolute command**. The action ought to be **voluntary** on the part of the executant; but, because the child **has not already voluntarily** executed the plan, the parent now has **unilaterally** to impose it. In this case, despite the plan requiring **voluntary** action, the executant of the plan has **zero ownership** of the plan.

Another common example concerns what is expressed as the result of the power of **fate**. When the Addresser wants to **imply**, 'Fate (**OR** destiny) decided that ~', this is the expression of a future matter that she will use. For no one can control fate. In this case too,

the executant of the 'plan' has **zero ownership** of the plan. Thus the difference between **voluntary** and **involuntary** is cancelled.

Another important aspect of **3 a i** is that the schedule that it unilaterally imposes is **'ownership-unknown'**: that is to say, when an Addresser says not */I want you to wash the family car/* but instead */You are to wash the family car/*, she avoids acknowledging any personal ownership of this schedule, though she may in fact have complete ownership of it: what she instead strongly implies to her Addressee is, in effect, that 'This is simply *how things are....*'

(3 a ii) result of a schedule of voluntary action that is very hard to change

We have already thought about one example of this kind of schedule, in the example of the three rock-bands. Each executant has **ownership** of the **voluntary** action of performing in the concert, but the degree of ownership **far from complete**, and so changing it is far from easy. The ownership, however, is not **'unknown'**.

(3 a iii) result of a timetable, etc.

Another kind of schedule that is very hard to change is one that is 'owned' by a very large number of people indeed – such as a city bus **timetable**. The ownership of a timetable is not so much **'unknown'** as **'hard to identify'**.

An Addresser will sometimes use this expression of future matters in order to **imply** that someone's individual timetable (even though that person may **in fact** have complete ownership of it) is **as difficult to change** as is a bus- or train-timetable. And, in the **media**, it is often used to report the schedules of **important people**.

Therefore, when an Addresser uses this of her **own** schedule, it can sometimes sound a little pompous, or self-aggrandizing: **'My** schedule happens to be too important to be subject to change....' – particularly if her Addressee knows that, in fact, she has **complete** ownership of that schedule.

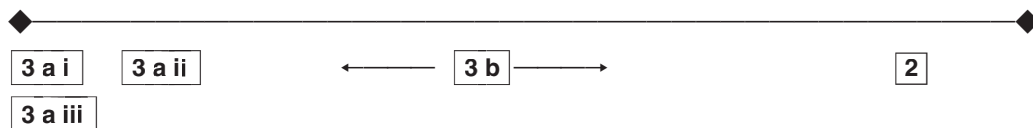
(3 b) result of a schedule of voluntary action that is not so hard to change

The effect of choosing this way of expressing a future **voluntary** state, process or instant-change can be compared with those of **2**, **3 a i**, **3 a ii** and **3 a iii** as shown following:

Chart ④

**impossible
to change**

**very easy
to change**



Exactly *how* hard to change such a schedule may be will vary, case by case. But, by *choosing not* to use either **3 a** or **2**, the Addresser can indicate *some degree of restraint* imposed upon the executant's future situation or action, and which is (very often) the result of *incomplete ownership* of the schedule in question. This may also be appropriately thought of as 'a fairly flexible schedule'.

What you need to do next

When you speak or write English, you yourself become, of course, 'an Addresser'. So you need to become accustomed to analyzing what you want to say, that is, to deciding first whether you want to express either (1) 'an involuntary result of the effects of a general nature or tendency', or else (2) 'a plan of which the executant has complete ownership', or else (3) 'a schedule (of which the executant does not have complete ownership)'; and then, if you have chosen (1), which of (a~d) you need to choose and, if (3), which of (a i~iii) and (b). As a first step in doing this, I want you to decide which of **1 a~d**, **2**, **3 a i~iii** and **3 b** the following examples belong to. The first example has been done for you.

Snow **will fall**, later this afternoon. 1a

1) Since the President is now dead, the Vice-president **governs** the country, until a general election can be held.

2) You are **to tidy** your bedroom.

3) Her train **gets in** at 12:30.

4) That building **is going to collapse** at any minute!

5) He will **come** late to class, damn him!

6) This room **remains** untouched until the police arrive.

7) As far as I know, I **am flying** to New York, tomorrow.

8) Oh dear, I think I'm **about to faint!**

9) The captain of our soccer team **is to have** the privilege of meeting a famous

- soccer star.
- 10) Tomorrow's edition of this program **is going to include** a special report on divorce.
- 11) I fear I **am never to see** my father again.
- 12) My daughter **will be** quite happy to drive you to the nearest station.
- 13) I **shall never trust** you again.
- 14) If you are not careful, I **shall certainly fall in love** with you.
- 15) When she gets her first paycheck, she **is going to treat** her mother to a delicious meal.
- 16) What **do we do** now?
- 17) You **will find** this problem rather difficult to solve.
- 18) We **are going to hope** that, sooner or later, our son will be released from prison.
- 19) He **is to drive** to New York, tomorrow, on business for the company.
- 20) And tonight Mr. Kite **is topping** the bill!
- 21) I will not **tolerate** such behavior in my subordinates!
- 22) The plane **lands** in fifteen minutes.

What you have to do next

Look at your results, and decide what ***pattern of words*** (= ***expression***) is used to express what kind of future state, process, or instant change. Category **2** has been done for you:

Chart ④

1 a		
1 b		
1 c		
1 d	OR	
2	be going to ~	
3 a i		
3 a ii		
3 a iii		
3 b		

What you have to do next

Below are a large number of examples, in which the verbs that express future matters are shown only in their dictionary forms [for example, **will find** → (**find**)]. Think about the **context** that is implied by each example, and decide (1) whether the Addresser is **predicting** [P], **declaring** [D], OR **reporting** [R], (2) what degree of ownership the executant has (**owner-ship impossible** [I] OR **complete ownership** [C]) OR **zero ownership** [Z] OR **partial ownership** [Pt]); (3) where necessary, how soon the matter will happen (**soon** [S] OR **later** [L]); and, finally, (4) how the dictionary forms should be changed to express the appropriate future matter. (There may be some examples for which you feel that either of **two** choices is equally appropriate.)

1) I (**expect**) you to come back by midnight. 1) 2) 3)

4) OR

2) Remember, whatever plan he may suggest, you (**agree**) with it. 1) 2) 3)

4) OR

- 3) Who is going to help me? – O.K., I (**help**). 1) 2) 3)
4) OR
- 4) Whatever you say, I (**be**) happy with her! 1) 2) 3)
4)
- 5) You never (**speak**) to my daughter again. 1) 2) 3)
4)
- 6) I (**start**) working in our Kyūshū · branch on the 25th of next month. 1) 2) 3)
4)
- 7) If you break with her in the near future, she (**feel**) very unhappy. 1) 2) 3)
4)
- 8) The Emperor (**meet**) the President of the U.S.A. tomorrow, at noon. 1) 2) 3)
4) OR
- 9) Tomorrow night, I probably (**remain**) at the office. I think my boss needs some help. 1) 2)
 3) 4)
- 10) We not (**doubt**) the truth of what he says. After all, he is our boss. 1) 2) 3)
4)
- 11) They have agreed that for now they (**share**) an apartment. 1) 2) 3)
4)
- 12) Our grandmother no longer (**eat**) properly. I think she's lost her appetite. 1) 2) 3)
4)
- 13) This little kitten (**die**), if we don't give it some milk very soon! 1) 2) 3)
4) OR
- 14) I (**go**) to Venice for my next summer holiday. 1) 2) 3)
4)
- 15) Autumn eventually (**come**), and the leaves gradually (**drop**) from the trees. 1) 2) 3)
4)
- 16) He says he (**live**) in Tibet. 1) 2) 3)
4)
- 17) Your parents (**be**) so happy once they have learned that you have got into Kandai. 1) 2)
 3) 4) OR
- 18) This summer, my parents (**take**) me to Paris. (I myself should prefer to go to New York.) 1)
 2) 3) 4)

Follow-up activities

Of course, merely completing the above few tasks does not mean that all learners will therefore have immediate and fluent command of this system of choices; a considerable amount of reinforcement is necessary. First of all, it seems essential that learners should have a combination of Charts ③ and ④, above (see Appendix 1, below) at first in printed form to hand, and a little later in their heads, both as a mind-map accessible as a visual image and as information. In order to bring the latter situation about, for several consecutive classes I use first a blank form of that combination-chart (see Appendix 2, below) and ask learners to fill it in from memory, and later provide no visual structure at all, and ask learners as quickly as possible to draw the chart from scratch.

Later on, I use a variety of increasingly less controlled activities designed to allow groups of at least three learners to take turns in being questioner, answerer, and monitor and, using packs of pre-prepared cards, seek and give information concerning various future matters that have first been presented in such a way as to make the appropriate choice of expression as little ambiguous as possible; each monitor chooses at random a card, which she does not show to the others, and which contains directions to the questioner, the correct results (or the essence of these), and points about which she should be vigilant. Learners are trained to request, when acting as monitors, any necessary revision of a question or an answer, and to do so by means of hand-signals (this avoiding recourse to the mother-tongue), or else (with more able classes) instructions in English only.

Finally I ask each learner to devise and memorize a short, original speech, concerning some aspect of her own future, and somehow incorporating at least one example of each of the choices for the expression of future matters, which she will then use as a basis for freer conversation with a number of other learners.

Higher-level development: rhetorical applications of the system of choices

I have entitled this first part 'Objective Application' because the system of choices is at the same time frequently applied in ways that deliberately break the basic rules concerning its use, in order to communicate more than is actually expressed – *i.e.* is applied rhetorically.

One very common example of this sort of application is, 'If you don't take greater care of your wife, one day you **are going to be** sorry.' 'One day' shows us that this perfectly well-formed utterance cannot be an example of **1 d** (an involuntary result that is going to happen very soon); thus it can only be a use of **2**; and yet what rational person would accuse another person of nursing a voluntary plan to make himself sorry? The rhetorical force of this apparently irrational use is, it seems to me, more or less this: 'You are behaving towards your wife in such a way that anyone might reasonably suppose you were

deliberately choosing to give yourself later cause for regret.’

Another example is when a well-trained waiter asks, ‘What ***will*** you ***have*** for dessert, ma’am?’ Objectively, one would expect this request to acknowledge the customer’s complete ownership of her choice, and yet ‘What ***will*** you ***have*** for dessert, ma’am?’ is, pragmatically, politer in rhetorical effect, because more respectful, than is ‘What ***are*** you ***going to have*** for dessert, ma’am?’. Along with the respective effects of many other rhetorical applications of this system of choices, the cause of this greater degree of politeness is something that I shall explore in subsequent parts of this paper, also presenting the interactive tasks that I use with higher-level students, to help them to expand their range of applications of the system in such a way as to meet more sophisticated communicational needs.

Acknowledgements

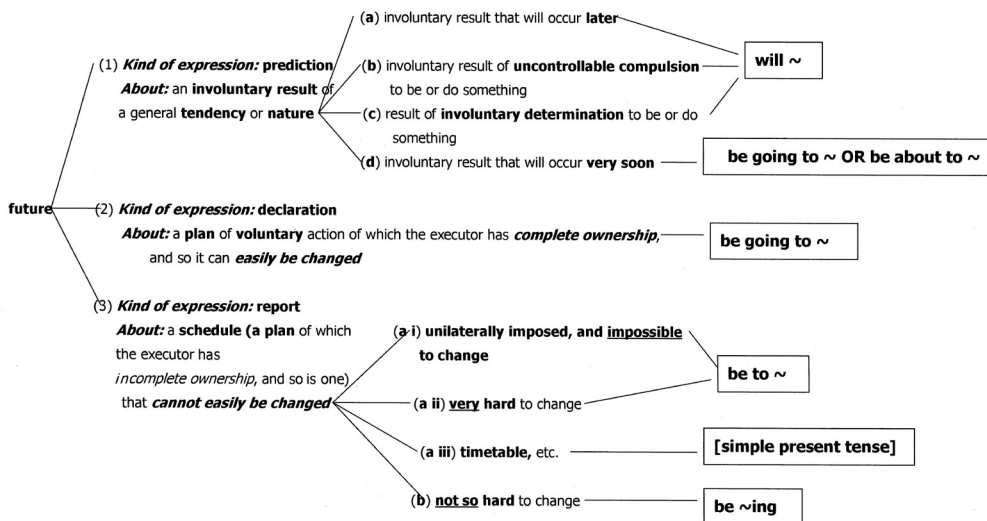
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I should like to express my great gratitude to my distinguished colleague Professor Eiichi Yamamoto, of IFLER, Kansai University, for many opportunities of discussing with him some of the ideas presented here.

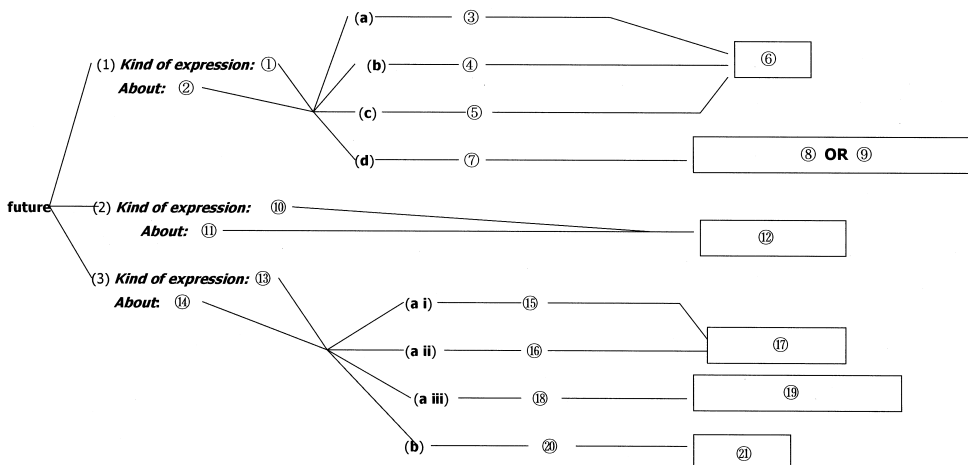
END NOTE

- 1) As I have so far been yearly piloting and improving the teaching materials that are here either summarized or quoted from, and am publishing this somewhat prematurely, I as yet have no Before-and-After studies with which to back up such assertions; but experience of taking my place among a double ring of students that talk to partner after partner has led me to feel pretty confident that, for those students that can take this approach on board – and they are far from any minority – it ***signally*** increases the appropriateness and assurance of their handling of the expression of future matters.

Appendix 1
Chart ④



Appendix 2
Chart ④: Test A



Expressions of Future Matters: Test A

Your Answers

Name: _____

Student Number: _____

What you have to do

Look at the numbers on Chart ④ and, in English, write the words that should go in each numbered place. Use ~ to express the verb or verb-stem.

① _____

② _____

③ _____

④ _____

⑤ _____

⑥ _____

⑦ _____

⑧ _____

⑨ _____

⑩ _____

⑪ _____

⑫ _____

⑬ _____

⑭ _____

⑮ _____

⑯ _____

⑰ _____

⑱ _____

⑲ _____

⑳ _____

㉑ _____