**Future: other expressions to talk about the future**

We use a number of expressions with main verb *be* when we refer to the future, especially the immediate future.

***Be about to***

We use *be about to* + base form of the verb to refer to things that we expect to happen very soon. We often use it with *just*, for emphasis:

*The ferry is****about to****leave.*

*The driver is****about to****collect them. Shall I phone to stop him?*

*We****’re****just****about to****set off for a walk. Do you want to come?*

**Warning:**

With time expressions, we don’t use *be about to*, we use the present simple:

*Hurry up, please! The coach****is about to****leave!*

*Hurry up, please! The coach****leaves****in five minutes!*

Not: ~~The coach is about to leave in five minutes!~~

***Be on the point of***

We can also use *be on the point of* + *-ing* form to refer to things that we expect to happen very soon. *Be on the point of* is similar to *be just about to*:

*I****was on the point of****leav****ing****my job but then I got promoted so I changed my mind.*

***Be due to***

We use *be due to* + base form of the verb to talk about things that are scheduled:

*The visitors****are due to****arrive at the factory at 10:30.*

***Be to***

*Be to* + base form of the verb has a number of meanings. It is rather formal.

Obligations

*Be to* refers to what someone is obliged or required to do. We also use it to refer to formal decisions:

[referring to an obligation]

*If I****am not to****tell anyone, then that’s simply not fair.*

[making decisions at a business meeting]

*So, George****is to****contact the Stockholm office, and Patricia****is to****speak to the Elsico representative. Agreed?*

Commands and instructions

We can also use *be to* when we give someone commands or instructions:

*You****are to****report to the head office by 8.30 am.*

*She****’s not to****be late. OK?*

*Be to* is common in newspaper headlines to refer to events which have been fixed or decided. We don’t always use the verb:

*Prime Minister****to****announce emergency plan on climate change.* (a headline – used without a verb) (Full form: *The Prime Minister****is to****announce an emergency plan on climate change*.)

***Be likely to***

*Be likely to* is used to talk about how probable things are:

***Are****parents who have a lot of money****likely to****spoil their children?*

It is often used to make comparisons with words like *more* and *less*:

*I think men****are more likely to****spend a lot of money on food than women are.*

**A:**

*I liked Budapest as well*.

**B:**

*Yeah. I****’m*** *probably* ***less likely to*** *go back there than to Prague*.

We also use *it’s likely* followed by *that* + clause:

***It’s likely that****sales will rise.*

We form the negative of *be likely to* and *be likely that* either with *not* or with *unlikely*. *Unlikely* is more formal:

*The company is****not likely to****make a profit in the second half of the year.*

*People are****unlikely to****listen to him now because they know he lied.*

***Be meant to***

*Be meant to* is used to talk about what is desirable, expected or intended:

**A:**

*It looks green to me*.

**B:**

*Oh*, ***is*** *it* ***meant to*** *be a different colour?*

*It****was meant to****be like a quiz and we were all in different teams and there****was meant to****be a fantastic prize.*

***Be supposed to***

*Be supposed to* is used to talk about obligations and arrangements:

*Where were you? You****were supposed to be****at the party!*

*You****’re supposed to have****an hour for lunch. That’s the law.*

It’s also used to talk about people’s expectations or beliefs about something:

[talking about some medicine]

**A:**

*Take some of this*.

**B:**

*What****’s*** *it* ***supposed to*** *do?* (*What does it do to you?*)

*And then I’m gonna get a train over to Brussels which takes all day as well. It****’s supposed to****be a nice route with forests and mountains and things.* (*gonna*represents ‘going to’, as it is pronounced in informal speaking.

***Be off to***

*Be off to* is used to talk about a future journey, however long or small is:

*I’m off to the shopping centre to buy some trousers*

*Next week we’re off to Italy.*

***Be bound to***

*Be bound to* is used to refer to something the speaker thinks for sure is happening:

*I’m bound to pass my driving test. I’ve been preparing it really well*

*It’s bound to rain tomorrow*

***Be thinking of***

*Be thinking of* is used to refer to future plans which are possible but aren’t decided yet.

*I’m thinking of taking a gap year*

***Be on the verge of***

*Be on the verge of means to be at the point where something is about to happen. We use it with a verb in –ing form or followed by a noun.*

*Jess seemed****on the verge of tears****.*

The show was on the verge of being cancelled due to low ratings.