

## WILL - WOULD – SHALL – SHOULD

These are the functions “*will, would, shall, should*” help to express:

- **WILL** [wɪl *unstressed* wəl] The short form is: ‘*ll* and the negative is **will not/won’t**

**WILL** is generally used after: *think/don’t think/I’m sure/probably/ suppose/ expect/ doubt/ definitely* etc

**Making personal predictions** (saying what we think will happen): *I don't think the Queen will ever abdicate. - I doubt if I'll stay much longer. - One day, people will travel to Mars*

Predictions can be used as a way of giving orders (instead of telling somebody to do something you just say firmly that it will happen): *you'll start work at 8 o'clock sharp! – The regiment will attack at dawn*

**Talking about the present with certainty (making deductions):** *I'm sure you will understand that there is nothing the Department can do - There's a letter for you. It'll be from the bank: they said they'd be writing.*

**Talking about the future with certainty:** *I won't be in the office until 11; I've got a meeting.*

**Talking about the past with certainty:** *I'm sure you will have noticed that attendance has fallen sharply.*

**Reassuring someone:** *Don't worry! You'll be fine, I'm sure. - It'll be all right! You won't have to speak for too long.*

**Making a decision:** *For the main course I'll have grilled tuna. - I'm very tired. I think I'll stay at home.*

**Making a semi-formal request:** *Will you open the door, please? - Sign this, will you? – Will you help me? Will you send this letter for me, please? - You'll water the plants while I'm away, won't you?*

**Offering to do something, showing willingness to do (or not do) something:** *I'll fetch the drinks. - Can somebody help me? I will! - I'll check this letter for you, if you want. - They won't lend us any more money.*

**Making a promise or a threat, to show firm intention:** *You can count on me! I'll be there at 8 o'clock. - If you don't finish your dinner off, you'll go straight to bed! - I'll stop smoking – I'll break your neck!*

**WON'T** [wɒŋt]: can be used to talk about **refusal when it relates to present situations:** *The car won't start - It's no good trying to persuade him. He won't go and that's that.*

- **WOULD** [wʊd; *unstressed* wəd]

**As the past of will, for example in indirect speech:** *"The next meeting will be in a month's time"* becomes: *He said the next meeting would be in a month's time.*

**Polite requests and offers (a 'softer' form of will):** *Would you like another cup of tea? - Would you give me a ring after lunch? - I'd like the roast duck, please.*

**In conditionals, to indicate 'distance from reality': imagined, unreal, impossible situations:** *If I won a lot of money, I would quit my job. - Jane would have found a new job if she had stayed in Boston*

**After 'wish', to show regret or irritation over someone (or something's) refusal or insistence on doing something (present or future):** *I wish you wouldn't keep interrupting me. I wish it would rain.*

**Talking about past habits (repeated past actions - similar meaning to used to):** *When I was small, we would always visit relatives on Christmas Day.*

**Future in the past:** *The assassination would become one of the key events of the century. – So this was the school where I would spend the next five years*

**WOULD RATHER** [wʊd rɑːðə] = would prefer to

**It is always followed by a bare infinitive** (*walk, go, etc*) **or a clause** (*subject + past tense*).

*I'd rather walk than DRIVE. - The guide would rather we kept together. - Would you rather eat now or later?*

**The negative is would rather not:** *I'd rather not take any risks. - My mum would rather we didn't go out.*

**NOTE:** We can also use *would sooner*. *I'd sooner walk than hang around for a bus.*

- **SHALL** [ʃæl; *unstressed* ʃəl]

In modern English **SHALL** is used in questions, when planning and/or organizing something, asking opinions/making suggestions, offers, asking for advice (**1<sup>st</sup> person singular and plural**)

**Making offers:** *Shall I fetch you another glass of wine? - Shall I shut the window?*

**Making suggestions:** *Shall we go to the cinema tonight? - Shall we go to the cinema?*

We usually use **SHALL for offers** (*Shall I carry your bag?*) and **WILL for requests** (*Will you give me a hand?*)

**SHALL WE?** is used as a question tag after **Let's:** *let's forget it, shall we?*

The contracted negative is **SHAN'T** [ʃɑːnt]

**SHALL** is used in formal situations (legal documents) to express obligation, even with third-person and second-person constructions: *The board of directors shall be responsible for payment to stockholders.*

*The college president shall report financial shortfalls to the executive director each semester.*

- **SHOULD** [ʃʊd unstressed ʃəd]

**Giving advice:** *I think you should go for the Alfa rather than the Audi. - You shouldn't be drinking if you're on antibiotics. - You shouldn't have ordered that chocolate dessert - you're not going to finish it.*

**Obligation: weak form of must:** *The university should provide more sports facilities.- The equipment should be inspected regularly.*

**Deduction:** *The letter should get to you tomorrow - I posted it first class.*

**Ought to:** usually has the same meaning as should (a bit more formal and objective), particularly in affirmative statements in the present: *You should/ought to get your hair cut.*

**Should** is much more common (less formal and subjective), so if you're not sure, use should.

Don't use **ought to** for instructions (*ought to* suggests that the speaker has no power to get things done, or that he/she thinks it is unlikely to happen): *this -shirt should ironed with a cool iron....*