

Future in Danish

Present about future - fact

Danish has no future tense. This is not as strange as it seems; in most languages present is extended to cover near future. In Danish you use present about future incidents if you consider them facts. For instance things that have already been arranged, processes which have already started and are not conditioned or depending on uncertain circumstances: *Solen står op klokken 8:10 i morgen.* (The sun will rise at 8:10 tomorrow morning)

Future and modal verbs

Modal verbs have more or less the usual meanings when used about future incidents.

Vil:

If you want to express a little uncertainty or subjectivity (= you will experience) about the incident you use *vil* as auxiliary: *Du vil blive højere end din far.* (You'll most likely grow a bit taller than your father/ One fine day you'll find that you're taller than your father).

Probably to make the message less offensive, public announcements of interruptions or discontinuation are often brought using *vil*. This is a bit confusing, since a cold shower is very factlike and concrete.

Vil also expresses wanting or intending:

Når hun ser hans bjerg af vasketøj, vil hun ikke giftes med ham alligevel.

(When she'll see his pile of laundry, she'll not want to marry him anyway)

Kan:

If you want to express that the incident is possible though not too likely, you use *kan* as auxiliary: *Du kan blive højere end din far, men de fleste piger bliver det ikke.* (You may/might grow taller than your father, but most girls do not).

Also a future capacity/capability is expressed with *kan*: *Om to år kan du tale dansk!* (In two years, you'll be able to speak Danish!)

Skal:

If you want to instruct somebody, present a plan, or suggest something, you use *skal*: *Du skal sende den i overmorgen.* (Send it the day after tomorrow). *Jeg synes, du skal prøve den nye færøske restaurant, det er NOMA på dope!* (You should try the new Faroese restaurant, it's NOMA on dope!)

And if you promise to do something, you also use *skal*: *Jeg skal være der klokken 10!* (I promise to be there at 10 o'clock).

Må:

If you want to express that there's no other choice/possibility, you use *må*: *Hvis buschaufførerne stadig strejker i morgen, må du tage bilen.*

(If the buss drivers are still on strike tomorrow, you'll have to take the car.)

Må also expresses permission/prohibition:

Når du bliver 18 må du drikke øl på bar.

(When you turn 18 you'll be allowed to drink beer in bars)