Let’s start with the following scenario: Your roommate wants you to go to the super market. You hate going to the super market, and your roommate knows it. So she/he is trying to persuade you by saying:

(1) If you go...

(1a) …I will wash the dishes.
(1b) …I can wash the dishes.
(1c) …I am willing to wash the dishes.
(1d) …I promise to wash the dishes.
(1e) …I swear to wash the dishes.

Washing the dishes (1a-e) is an action belonging to the future, in the sense that it will be fulfilled after the moment of speaking. This future action may be described by several means: by using the future simple (like in 1a) or an infinitive combined with the appropriate main verb (like in 1b-e). Infinitives originally refer to actions to be fulfilled at a time after the moment of speaking: If I promise to wash the dishes, then I am not washing the dishes now, but I will wash them later.

Verbs used in the present or the past come with an air of certainty. If I refer to a past or a present action I seem to be describing a fact and thus my words can easily be verified or contradicted. For example, if I say “It is raining” someone might open the window and check the truth of my statement. When it comes to the future, this air of certainty seems to fade. If I say “It is going to rain” nobody can check the truth of this statement and frankly nobody can be sure. A similar sense of uncertainty covers the area of intentions, volitions, obligations, abilities or possibilities, the typical area of the infinitive. Even if I swear to wash the dishes (like in 1e), nobody can be absolutely certain that I will keep my promise. In terms of meaning, then, infinitives share a common ground with future tenses, a fact that explains their formal resemblance in several languages. One of them is Modern Greek.

9.1 A Tense for the Future: the Modern Greek μέλλοντας

Modern Greek has several tenses related to the future, but the leading role is retained by the tense called (απλός) μέλλοντας, which is equivalent to the English future simple and the structure be going to.

The Unit brings only good news for absolute beginners. There is nothing basic you don’t
know about the Modern Greek μέλλοντας. I just have to put things in order, add some details and let you enjoy the future.

**9.1.1 The Form of μέλλοντας**

Let me first give you some examples of verbs in the present, past, and future tenses:

(2) δουλεύω δούλεψα θα δουλέψω γράφω έγραψα θα γράψω

Unlike the present and the past, the Modern Greek future is a periphrastic tense. In other words it is formed out of two components: the particle θα and the verbal form related to the future. θα remains invariable through inflection, while the verbal form does not:

(3) θα δουλέψω (“I will work”)  
θα δουλέψεις (“you will work”)  
etc.

θα is absolutely obligatory for the future. To put it differently: If you don’t have θα, then you have no future. People simply will not understand that you are referring to a future action.

Let’s focus on the verbal form. The stem of the future is based on the perfective stem (check Unit 2.2.2 on page 28). Do you know this stem? Partially, you do. The perfective stem is also the basis for the Modern Greek αόριστος. This is why the past and future tenses seem to have an affinity that the present does not share:

(4) δουλεύω δούλεψα θα δουλέψω  
γράφω έγραψα θα γράψω

This affinity is a great help for you. It means that you can use the stem of the past tense in order to construct the perfective stem and then use it to make the future. All you have to do is take the stem of the past and remove any feature that is typical of the past:

- Remove the endings of the past:

(5) δούλεψ- έγραψ-

- Remove the stress. Remember that the trisyllabic rule (see Unit 8.1.2 on page 115) is also typical of the past. Accordingly you should remove the initial ὑ- when present. What you see below in capital letters is the perfective stem of these verbs:
In order to get the future you must follow these steps:

- Add the particle θα

(7) θα δουλέψ-  θα γράψ-

- Restore the stress of the verb on its ordinary place, as it is in the present:

(8) θα δουλέψ-  θα γράψ-

- Add the endings of the future. These endings are not something new. They come directly from the present tense. Compare the following:

(9) δουλεύω  θα δουλέψω  γράφω  θα γράψω
dουλεύεις  θα δουλέψεις  γράφεις  θα γράψεις
etc. etc.

This is it! As you see, there is absolutely nothing new to learn about the future.

Time for practice: What about the future tense of the verbs πλέω and γυρίζω?

Let’s start with πλέω. It is an irregular verb, so you are supposed to have memorized its past form (but if you haven’t, go back to Table 8.4 on page 115). OK, the past is ἐπλύνα. In order to get the perfective stem you have to remove everything that belongs to the past. What you have is this:

(10) ΠΛΥΝ-

You are ready now to add the features of the future:

(11) θα πλέω

Let’s go to γυρίζω. It is a regular verb, so you can follow the procedure by yourselves:

(12) γυρίζω  →  γύρισα  →  ΓΥΡΙΣ-  →  θα γυρίσω

It is now time to focus on two somewhat problematic points of the future:

- The relationship between the future and the past stem is less clear when it comes to the irregular verbs of the following table (most of them have irregular past forms and belong to
Group 1 of Table 8.3 on page 115. Here again you will have to use your memory and not your reason. (If you need to check the meaning of the verbs, go to the Appendix on page 162. The same holds for the following Tables.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESENT</th>
<th>PAST</th>
<th>FUTURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>βγαίνω</td>
<td>βγήκα</td>
<td>θα βγω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>βλέπω</td>
<td>είδα</td>
<td>θα δω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>βρίσκω</td>
<td>βρήκα</td>
<td>θα βρω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἑρχομαι</td>
<td>ἠρθα</td>
<td>θα ἐρθω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἑχω</td>
<td>εἶχα</td>
<td>θα ἔχω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>λέω</td>
<td>είπα</td>
<td>θα πω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>μπάινω</td>
<td>μπήκα</td>
<td>θα μπω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>παίρνω</td>
<td>πήρα</td>
<td>θα πάρω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πηγαίνω/πάω</td>
<td>πήγα</td>
<td>θα πάω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πίνω</td>
<td>ἤπια</td>
<td>θα πιω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>τρέω</td>
<td>ἑφαγα</td>
<td>θα φάω</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 9.1: Verbs with an Irregular Future.**

- Verbs in the future are inflected like the present, but which one? (Please note that the Modern Greek present is not homogeneous.) The answer is rather simple: they go according to the inflectional model they look like. Take the following examples:

  (13) γράφω  →  θα γράψω  
  τράω  →  θα φάω  
  λέω  →  θα πω  

In θα γράψω there is a consonant before the (unstressed) -ω, therefore the future goes like group A1 (see Unit 4.1.1 on page 54). θα φάω looks very much like group A2 (see Unit 4.1.2 on page 55), while θα πω goes like group B2 (see Unit 4.1.4 on page 57). Therefore there are three inflectional models of the future (group B1 has no representatives in the future):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SINGULAR</th>
<th>(A1)</th>
<th>(A2)</th>
<th>(B2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>θα γράψω</td>
<td>θα φάω</td>
<td>θα πω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>θα γράψεις</td>
<td>θα φαζ</td>
<td>θα πειξ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>θα γράψει</td>
<td>θα φάει</td>
<td>θα πει</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.1.2 The Use of μέλλοντας

The Modern Greek simple future is used to describe actions that are going to take place after the moment of speaking. Therefore, it typically combines with three major groups of adverbials:

- Adverbs related to the future:

  | αύριο | “tomorrow” |
  | μεθαύριο | “the day after tomorrow” |
  | του χρόνου | “next year” |

| Table 9.3: Adverbs Related to the Future. |

- Prepositional phrases introduced by σε:

  (14) Σε δύο μέρες / εβδομάδες / μήνες θα πάω στην Αθήνα.
       “I will go to Athens in two days / weeks / months.”
• The single (non-prepositional) temporal accusative modified by the adjectives \(\text{άλλος} \) (“other”) / \(\text{επόμενος} \) (“next”):

(15a) Την \(\text{άλλη} / \text{επόμενη} \) \(\varepsilonβδομάδα \ θα \ πάμε \ στην \ Αθήνα. \)

“We will go to Athens \textit{next week}.”

(15b) Τον \(\text{άλλο} / \text{επόμενο} \) \(\muίνα \ θα \ πάω \ στην \ Κρήτη. \)

“I will go to Crete \textit{next month}.”

The future is also compatible with several time expressions typically related to the present:

(ΙΙΙ) Θα \(\varepsilonρθω \ σήμερα. \)

“I will come today.”

The interrogative and the negative versions of the future are no surprise. As with the present or the past tenses, they are formed by intonation and the addition of the particle \(\text{δεν} \) (always before the particle \(\thetaα \)) respectively:

(ΙVa) Θα \(\piάει \ σινεμά. \)

“She/He will go to the movies.”

(IVb) Θα \(\piάει \ σινεμά; \)

“\textit{Will} she/he go to the movies?”

(IVc) \(\text{δεν} \ θα \ πάει \ σινεμά. \)

“She/He \textit{will not} go to the movies.”

Personal pronouns must be posited right before the “real” verb of the verbal construction (see Unit 6.1 on page 84).

(V) Α: \(\Thetaα \ δείς \ τον \ Πέτρο; \)

“Will you see Peter?”

B1: \(Ναι, \ θα \ τον \ δω. \)

“Yes, I will see him.”

B2: \(Οχι, \ \text{δεν} \ θα \ τον \ δω. \)

“No, I won’t see him.”

9.2 The Modern Greek “Infinitive”

The semantic affinity between future tenses and infinitives across languages is the basis for the formal affinity between the Modern Greek future simple and the Modern Greek “infinitive”. And this is where there are really good news for absolute beginners.
9.2.1 The Form of the “Infinitive”

Check the following sentences:

(16a) Θα οδηγήσω. (FUTURE SIMPLE)
“I will drive.”

(16b) Θέλω να οδηγήσω. (“INFINITIVE”)
“I want to drive.”

In order to form the “infinitive” all you have to do is take the verb in the future and replace θα with να, which is equivalent to the English to.

Keep in mind that the Modern Greek “infinitive” is a rather peculiar case of “infinitive” (the technical term for it is “subjunctive”). Let’s start with the following examples:

(17a) Θέλω να οδηγήσω.
“I want to drive.”

(17b) Θέλει να οδηγήσει.
“She/He wants to drive.”

(17c) Θέλουμε να οδηγήσουμε.
“We want to drive.”

Unlike English infinitives, and infinitives in general, the Modern Greek “infinitive” is inflected according to person and number. It then forms an entire inflectional model, which copies the inflectional models of the future (with να replacing θα). Compare to Table 9.2 on page 128:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(A1)</th>
<th>(A2)</th>
<th>(B2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SINGULAR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>να γράψω</td>
<td>να φάω</td>
<td>να ποιώ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>να γράψεις</td>
<td>να φας</td>
<td>να πεις</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>να γράψει</td>
<td>να φάει</td>
<td>να πει</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLURAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>να γράψουμε</td>
<td>να φάμε</td>
<td>να πούμε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>να γράψετε</td>
<td>να φάτε</td>
<td>να πέιτε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>να γράψουν(ε)</td>
<td>να φάνε</td>
<td>να πουν(ε)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.4: The Inflectional Models of the “Infinitive”.

Let’s see now the following sentences:

(18a) Θέλω να οδηγήσω.
     “I want (-) to drive.”

(18b) Θέλω να οδηγήσεις.
     “I want you to drive.”

In 18a the speaker has an intention that will be fulfilled by himself. In 18b, the speaker has an intention that will be fulfilled by another person. In order to express the difference, you simply change the person of the “infinitive” according to the person who will perform the action.

9.2.2 The Use of the “Infinitive”

“Infinitives” depend on other verbs, called main verbs (usually modal verbs like must, should, may etc.). Here is a list of basic verbs for levels A1-A2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>θέλω</th>
<th>πρέπει</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>μπορώ</td>
<td>μπορεί</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>προτιμώ</td>
<td>χρειάζεται</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>προσπαθώ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>λέω</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>σκέφτομαι</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πάω</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>έχω</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.5: Verbs with an “Infinitive” as a Complement.

A few remarks about main verbs:

• All main verbs require a full “infinitive”. In other words, in Modern Greek you cannot remove να from the “infinitive”:

(19a) Θέλω να οδηγήσω.
     “I want to drive.”

(19b) Μπορώ να οδηγήσω.
     “I can (-) drive.”

• Unlike the verbs of the left column that vary according to person, the verbs of the right column do not:
Verbs like πρέπει (equivalent to must, ought to, should) have only one form (usually taken from the third person singular) to denote all persons. In terms of meaning such verbs have no person (this is why they are called “impersonal” in grammar) and the person is taken from the “infinitive”.

- Let’s go now to issues of meaning. Most verbs on the list may be used with or without an “infinitive” and retain the same meaning everywhere:

(21a) Θέλω μια μπίρα.
“I want/need a beer”.

(21b) Θέλω να πιω μια μπίρα.
“I want/need to have a beer.”

Some verbs, though, come with a different meaning when used as main verbs:

(22a) Λέω την αλήθεια. / Λέω ψέματα.
“I tell the truth.” / “I tell lies.”

(22b) Λέω να πάω σινεμά.
“I am planning to go to the movies.”
“I am thinking about going to the movies.”
“I am considering going to the movies.”

The structure πάω+“infinitive” is not equivalent to the English be going to. The Modern Greek construction is still closer to motion, and the sense of futurity is rather weak.
There is a significant difference between the personal μπορώ and the impersonal μπορεί. The first expresses ability, while the second expresses probability.

(VIa) Μπορώ να οδηγήσω.  
“I can drive.” / “I am able to drive.”

(VIb) Μπορεί να οδηγήσω.  
“I may drive.” / “Maybe I’ll drive.”

What about the following sentence?

(VII) Ο Πέτρος μπορεί να οδηγήσει.

The above sentence may have two readings: a) Peter is able to drive, and b) Maybe Peter will drive. This happens because the verb is in the third person singular so you cannot know a priori whether it represents the personal μπορώ or the impersonal μπορεί. How can we tell which one is the correct reading? It is the context now that helps us decide about the most appropriate reading.

Χρειάζεται is the impersonal version of the verb χρειάζομαι (“to need”). It usually comes as part of interrogative or negative sentences:

(VIIIa) Χρειάζεται να πάρω ομπρέλα;  
“Do I need to take an umbrella?”

(VIIIb) Δεν χρειάζεται να πάρεις ομπρέλα.  
“You do not need to take an umbrella.”

• Main verbs may be explicit or implicit (presupposed) in sentences like the following:

(23a) (-) να φάω τα πατατάκια;  
(23b) (-) να πας στο δωμάτιό σου.

Here the missing main verb can be reconstructed by the context. I would easily choose μπορώ for sentence 23a, and πρέπει or θέλω for sentence 23b:

(24a) (Μπορώ) να φάω τα πατατάκια;  
(“May I eat the potato chips?”)

(24b) (Θέλω) να πας στο δωμάτιό σου. / (Πρέπει) να πας στο δωμάτιό σου.  
“I want you to go to your room.” / “You must go to your room.”
An implicit main verb is typical of actions with a social relevance, like asking for permission or giving orders. In terms of social convenience, omitting the main verb would make things easier for the one who is asking for something (as in 23a) or the one who is asked to do something (as in 23b).

Let’s now focus again on “infinitives” inside these structures. What you should keep in mind are the following:

- Modern Greek “infinitives” are tenseless. Their relevance to time is taken up by the main verb:

  (25a) Μπορώ να οδηγήσω.
       “I can drive.”

  (25b) Μπόρεσα να οδηγήσω.
       “I was able to drive.” / “I could drive.”

  (25c) Θα μπορέσω να οδηγήσω.
       “I will be able to drive.”

- Questions with an “infinitive” are again easy to form:

  (26) Θέλεις να οδηγήσεις;
       “Do you want to drive?”

- “Infinitives” combine with the negative particle μην instead of δεν:

  (27) Θέλω να μην οδηγήσω σήμερα
       “I want not to drive today.” = “I’d rather not drive today.”

Notice that negating the “infinitive” is not totally equivalent to negating the main verb:

  (28a) Δεν θέλω να οδηγήσω.
       “I don’t want to drive today.”

  (28b) Θέλω να μην οδηγήσω σήμερα.
       “I’d rather not drive today.”

Considering similar constructions (see Units 6.1 on page 84 and 9.1.2 on page 130), the position of the personal pronouns is not a surprise. Notice, though, that such a pronoun must stay within the scope of the “infinitive” and not attach itself to the main verb (check the incor-
After a painful present and past, the future is really nicer for the verb “to be”. All you have to do is add θα or να to its present and take the future simple or the “infinitive” (θα είμαι, να είμαι).

9.3 Back to Conditional Clauses

Having acquired the necessary grammar, let’s go back to conditional clauses:

(30a) Αν πεινάς, θα βρεις φαγητό στο ψυγείο.
     “If you are hungry, you will find some food in the fridge.”

(30b) Αν (θα) πεινάσεις, θα βρεις φαγητό στο ψυγείο.
     “If you get hungry, you will find some food in the fridge.”

Example 30a refers to a present situation, and the tense of the if-clause is the present. Example 30b refers to a future situation, and the tense of the if-clause is the future simple, with the particle θα being explicit or implicit. Both examples illustrate factual conditionals, that is conditionals whose conclusion seems possible.

Let’s see the following cases:

(31a) Αν πεινάσεις, θα βρεις φαγητό στο ψυγείο.
     “If you get hungry, you will find some food in the fridge.”

(31b) Αν πεινάσεις, μπορείς να βρεις φαγητό στο ψυγείο.
     “If you get hungry, you can find some food in the fridge.”

The conclusion of a factual conditional may be represented by the future tense or an “infinitive”.

What about counterfactual conditionals? At this moment you simply cannot do it. Counterfactual conditionals need a lot more regarding the verbal system, which makes them part of levels B2 or C1.
Έλα!
This is one of the first words absolute beginners recognize within the flow of fast everyday Modern Greek as spoken by natives. Έλα is equivalent to *Come!*. Apart from its common use, it appears in several contexts with a variable meaning. People answer their phone saying έλα! when they see a call from a friend. People say έλα! when they hear something which is hard to believe. People also say έλα! when they want to express irony. Finally, people say έλα! when they need to hear something again.

In terms of grammar έλα! represents the imperative of the verb ἔρχομαι. Imperatives express commands, that is direct requests, which are not to be questioned. Commands come with an air of authority that excludes them from the area of politeness (see Chapter 6 on page 93). Most of the time people instead of the imperative people prefer to use a structure with the “infinitive” in order to sound less forceful:

(IX) Έλα τώρα! = Μπορείς να έρθεις τώρα; / Θέλω να έρθεις τώρα.
“Come now!” = “Can you come now?” / “I want you to come now.”

Imperatives love any context that does not require politeness. Therefore they are typical in informal everyday situations, as well as situations where a command would be appreciated by the recipient. If I were directing a (desperate) unknown driver park her/his car in a narrow place, I would use lots of imperatives and she/he would not mind at all.

Imperatives represent another chapter of the Modern Greek grammar, which is usually part of levels B1-B2. As absolute beginners then you should stick to indirect requests as expressed by the “infinitive”. But still I believe you should know some basic imperatives of everyday use:

(X) (αφήνω) áσε “leave”, “let”
(δίνω) δόσε “give”
(κάθομαι) κάθισε/κάτσε “sit”
(κοιτάζω) κοίτα “look”
(πάω) πήγαινε/άντε “go”
(παίρνω) πάρε “take”, “get”
(φεύγω) φύγε “go away”

SUMMARY
Future tenses and infinitives share a common ground in terms of meaning, which explains their formal resemblance in several languages (one of them is Modern Greek). Chapter 9 introduces the Modern Greek μέλλοντας and “infinitive” in terms of their form and use.
KEY WORDS
future, future simple (μέλλοντας), “infinitive” (subjunctive), main verb, perfective stem

EXERCISES
1. Τι θα κάνεις αν... Match the conditional clauses with the appropriate conclusion.

1. Αν βρεις ένα πορτοφόλι με 150 ευρώ...
2. Αν συναντήσεις έναν παλιό σου φίλο στον δρόμο...
3. Αν δεν υπάρχει τίποτα στο ψυγείο...
4. Αν πας στην Ιταλία...
5. Αν πας σινεμά...
6. Αν έχεις πονοκέφαλο...

a. ...Θα πάρεις μια ασπιρίνη.
b. ...Θα στέλεις μια κάρτα στους γονείς σου.
c. ...Θα κλείσεις το κινητό σου.
d. ...Θα το πας στην αστυνομία.
e. ...Θα πάτε μαζί για καφέ.
f. ...Θα πας να φας έναν γύρο.

2. Τι μπορούμε να κάνουμε... Fill in the blancs with the appropriate form of the verb.

1. ... με ένα κουτάλι. Μπορούμε _______________ (τρώω) σούπα.
2. ... με ένα μαχαίρι. Μπορούμε _______________ (κόβω) ψωμί.
3. ... με ένα κομπιούτερ. Μπορούμε _______________ (στέλνω) μέιλ.
4. ... με ένα ποδήλατο. Μπορούμε _______________ (πάω) βόλτα.
5. ... με μια μπάλα. Μπορούμε _______________ (παίζω) βόλεϊ.
6. ... με τέσσερα αυγά και λίγο τυρί. Μπορούμε _______________ (φτιάχνω) ομελέτα.

For the Modern Greek translation of Chapter 9 press here www.moderngreek.eu