

Immediate future

expressions

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BE ABOUT TO DO SOMETHING

to be going to do something very soon

- We were just about to leave when Susan arrived.

it is often used with just

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

used in the past to refer to things that were going to happen but didn't:

- I was about to complain but he came over and apologised.

it's not used with time expressions

- I was about to call you.

Not: I was about to call you in ten minutes.

BE ON THE POINT OF (DOING) SOMETHING

to be going to do something very soon

- The country's economy is on the point of collapse.
 - Bill is on the point of having a nervous breakdown.
 - I was on the point of handing in my notice when they offered me promotion.
 - I was on the point of going out when the telephone rang.
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BE ON THE VERGE OF (DOING) SOMETHING

to be at the point where something is about to happen

- Mike seemed on the verge of tears.
 - Mountain gorillas are on the verge of extinction.
 - He was on the verge of saying something but stopped and shook his head.
 - The show was on the verge of being cancelled due to low ratings.
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BE ON THE BRINK OF (DOING) SOMETHING

to be at the point where a new or different situation is about to begin

- Scientists are on the brink of (= extremely close to) a major new discovery.
 - She believed she was on the brink of discovering a cure for cancer.
 - He was on the brink of tears.
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BE ALL SET TO DO SOMETHING

be ready or prepared to do something

- He was all set to go, but I stopped him.
 - We were all set to leave when the phone rang.
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