

# Passive Voice / Causative Form

## Passive Voice

The passive is formed with the appropriate tense of the verb **to be** + **past participle**. Only transitive verbs (verbs which take an object) can be put into the passive.

	Active Voice	Passive Voice
Present Simple	He <b>gives</b> lectures.	Lectures <b>are given</b> .
Present Continuous	He <b>is giving</b> a lecture.	A lecture <b>is being given</b> .
Past Simple	He <b>gave</b> a lecture.	A lecture <b>was given</b> .
Past Continuous	He <b>was giving</b> a lecture.	A lecture <b>was being given</b> .
Future Simple	He <b>will give</b> a lecture.	A lecture <b>will be given</b> .
Present Perfect	He <b>has given</b> a lecture.	A lecture <b>has been given</b> .
Past Perfect	He <b>had given</b> a lecture.	A lecture <b>had been given</b> .
Future Perfect	He <b>will have given</b> a lecture.	A lecture <b>will have been given</b> .
Present Infinitive	He <b>should give</b> a lecture.	A lecture <b>should be given</b> .
Perfect Infinitive	He <b>should have given</b> a lecture.	A lecture <b>should have been given</b> .
ing form	She remembers him <b>giving</b> a lecture.	She remembers a lecture <b>being given</b> .
Perfect-ing form	<b>Having given</b> the lecture, ...	The lecture <b>having been given</b> , ...
Modal + be + p.p.	He <b>must give</b> a lecture.	The lecture <b>must be given</b> .

Present Perfect Continuous, Future Continuous and Past Perfect Continuous are not normally used in the passive.

**Get** is used in colloquial English instead of **be** to express something happening by accident.

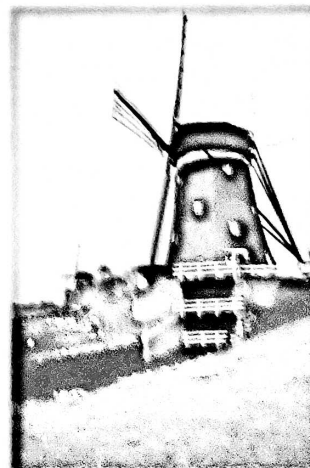
*She'll **get** killed if she goes on driving like that.*

## Use

The passive is used: a) when the person who performs the action (**agent**) is **unknown, unimportant or obvious from the context** *Her flat **was broken into** yesterday. (by a burglar - obvious agent)* b) to **emphasise the agent** *Her wedding dress was delivered to her **by the dressmaker herself** yesterday.* c) to make **statements more formal or polite** *My dress **has been ruined**. (more polite than saying "You have ruined my dress.")* and d) when we are more interested in the action than the agent, such as in **news reports, formal notices, instructions, processes, headlines, advertisements etc.** *A Christmas bazaar **will be held** tomorrow.*

### Put the verbs in brackets into the correct passive form.

- Holland ...*is said*... (say) to be one of the prettiest countries in Europe.
- I hate ..... (tell) lies.
- My television ..... (deliver) tomorrow.
- Their telephone ..... (install) yesterday.
- Teachers ought ..... (pay) a higher salary.
- Hotel rooms must ..... (vacate) by 12 noon.
- The villa ..... (sell) by public auction next week.
- She hopes her home ..... (build) by May.
- Heartbreak House* ..... (write) by George Bernard Shaw.
- My car ..... (respray) at the moment.
- Hopefully, she ..... (promote) by the end of next month.
- I wish I ..... (teach) how to type when I was at school.
- Your application should ..... (hand in) last Monday. It's too late now I'm afraid!
- The wedding reception must ..... (book) a month before the wedding.
- The building ..... (evacuate) ten minutes before the explosion took place.



## Changing from Active into Passive

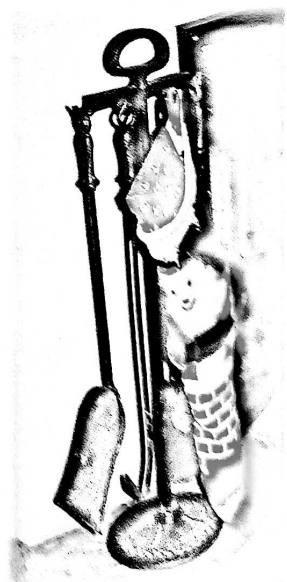
- The object of the active verb becomes the subject in the passive sentence. The active verb changes into a passive form and the subject of the active verb becomes the agent, which is either introduced with "by" or is omitted.

Active Voice			Passive Voice		
subject	verb	object	subject	verb	agent
John	posted	the letters.	The letters	were posted	by John.

- By + agent** is used to say who or what did the action. *She was knocked over by a car.* **With + instrument / material** is used to say what the agent used or after **past participles** such as coloured, crammed, crowded, filled, flavoured, packed etc. *She was killed with a hammer.* **By + agent** is omitted when the agent is **unknown, unimportant, obvious from the context** or referred to by words such as: **someone, people, I, etc.** *They revealed the truth. → The truth was revealed.* ("by them" is omitted)
- Verbs which take **who** objects (*give, offer* etc) form their passive in two ways; it is more usual to start the sentence with the **person object, not the thing object.** *They offered Ann a bunch of flowers. → Ann was offered a bunch of flowers.* (more usual than: *A bunch of flowers was offered to Ann.*)
- Verbs followed by a **preposition** (*accuse of, take down* etc) take the **preposition immediately after them** when turned into the passive. *She took down the minutes of the meeting. → The minutes of the meeting were taken down.*
- In **passive questions** with **who, whom** or **which** we do not omit **by.** *Who gave you this information? → Who were you given this information by?*
- Hear, help, make, see** are followed by a **to-infinitive** in the passive. *She made me work overtime. → I was made to work overtime.* Note that **hear, see, watch** can be followed by a **present participle** in the active and passive. *We saw her crying. → She was seen crying.*

## 151 Change the sentences from the active into the passive. Omit the agent where it can be omitted.

- Santa Claus will leave your presents in the stocking. ...Your presents will be left in the stocking by Santa Claus....
- Bad organisation spoiled their holiday. ....
- Teachers mark hundreds of exam papers every year. ....
- Who wrote *Romeo and Juliet*? ....
- You should dry your hair before you go out. ....
- You mustn't tell him the truth. ....
- She likes people taking her to the theatre. ....
- Why didn't they give her the job? ....
- She told them not to tell anyone. ....
- They should have given us a bonus. ....
- The doctors will bring him in for an examination. ....
- Fog has delayed all flights. ....
- She didn't send me any parcels. ....
- She had cleaned the house before I got there. ....
- When we arrived at the hotel, they had filled all the rooms. ....
- Why haven't you invited Mary to the party? ....
- Paula will help you finish your project. ....
- The mayor is opening the new community centre next week. ....
- We heard her complaining strongly to the manager. ....
- You can leave your bags at the left-luggage office. ....
- Workmen found some antique vases in the old house. ....
- The architects have drawn up plans for the new library. ....
- Who gave him the new car? ....
- They are going to set the lion free next week. ....
- What time do you expect him to arrive? ....



### 52 Change the sentences from the passive into the active.

- 1 Who was the Mona Lisa painted by? ...Who painted the Mona Lisa?...
- 2 The old barn has been pulled down. ....
- 3 The results will be published in July. ....
- 4 The trip was ruined by bad weather. ....
- 5 The letter should have been posted last week. ....
- 6 Who was the money raised by? .....
- 7 Why hasn't the house been painted yet? .....
- 8 She was heard shouting. ....
- 9 How much were you paid? .....
- 10 His car has been stolen. ....
- 11 I can't bear being cheated. ....
- 12 A famous actress will be chosen to advertise the product. ....
- 13 John was made to do the washing up. ....
- 14 The ozone layer is gradually being destroyed by pollution. ....
- 15 A bring-and-buy sale is being held next month. ....
- 16 Our house was done up by a famous interior decorator. ....
- 17 The cracks in the wall were caused by the earthquake. ....
- 18 Thousands of rare birds are killed by hunters every year. ....
- 19 Her purse was stolen on the bus. ....
- 20 When will we be told the time of his arrival? .....
- 21 An ancient village has been uncovered by archaeologists. ....
- 22 Why hasn't the dishwasher been repaired yet? .....
- 23 A new drug is being developed by scientists. ....
- 24 A new breed of cow is to be introduced into the country by farmers. ....
- 25 The furniture will have been removed by noon. ....
- 26 Who were you going to be replaced by? .....
- 27 The island is being ruined by tourists. ....
- 28 Two rooms had been booked for her by her travel agent. ....
- 29 She was seen to leave the building. ....
- 30 Seats should have been reserved a week ago. ....



### 153 Fill in "by" or "with".

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 The Magus was written ...by... John Fowles. | 6 The glass was cut ..... a special tool.       |
| 2 Who was the radio invented .....?           | 7 Her hair is coloured ..... henna.             |
| 3 The cyclist was knocked down ..... a bus.   | 8 "Born in the USA" was sung ..... Springsteen. |
| 4 Soup is eaten ..... a spoon.                | 9 The roast was flavoured ..... wine.           |
| 5 The car was fixed ..... a mechanic.         | 10 Music will be played ..... the local band.   |

### 154 Change into the passive.

- A Police are investigating a series of break-ins in the Hattersby area. Residents have heard noises, but nobody has actually seen anything suspicious. The recent rise in crime in the neighbourhood has shocked residents. Locals are discussing matters of security with the police and they have requested greater police presence in the area.

...A series of break-ins.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....



## Passive Voice / Causative Form

- B A wealthy businessman has just bought the Black Swan Hotel. The Barrett family owned it for many years, and they should have restored the building many years ago, but they couldn't find enough money. The new owner is closing the hotel for a few months for redecoration. At the moment workmen are polishing the floors and redecorating all the rooms.



The verbs **believe, expect, feel, hope, know, report, say, think** etc are used in the following passive patterns in personal and impersonal constructions.

- **subject (person) + passive verb + to -inf**  
(personal construction)
- **it + passive verb + that -clause**  
(impersonal construction)

The police report that she is in France.  
**She is reported to be in France.**  
**It is reported that she is in France.**

### 155 Turn the following sentences into the passive as in the example:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1 They think he is lying.<br/>He ...<i>is thought to be lying</i>...<br/>It ...<i>is thought that he is lying</i>...</p> <p>2 They believe he got lost in the forest.<br/>He .....<br/>It .....</p> <p>3 They say she has been very ill.<br/>She .....<br/>It .....</p> <p>4 They said the president had been shot.<br/>The president .....<br/>It .....</p> <p>5 They believe she was taking drugs.<br/>She .....<br/>It .....</p> | <p>6 They expect he will pass his driving test.<br/>He .....<br/>It .....</p> <p>7 They said she was wrongly accused.<br/>She <i>is said to be wrongly</i> .....<br/>It .....</p> <p>8 They believe he is leaving soon.<br/>He .....<br/>It .....</p> <p>9 They say his health is very poor.<br/>His health .....<br/>It .....</p> <p>10 They report that some papers have been stolen.<br/>Some papers .....<br/>It .....</p> |
|--|--|

### 156 Complete the sentences using the words in bold. Use two to five words.

- Many people believe that eating too fast causes indigestion.  
**believed** It ...*is believed that eating*... too fast causes indigestion.
- The teacher will send you out if you keep on talking.  
**be** You ..... if you keep on talking
- They are going to transfer him to Portugal.  
**be** He ..... to Portugal
- They will have completed the construction by September.  
**been** The ..... by September
- They are holding the caretaker responsible for the problems.  
**is** The ..... for the problems
- A journalist is going to cover the story.  
**be** The story ..... by a journalist
- They will have appointed a new director by the end of the week.  
**been** A new ..... by the end of the week
- They gave him a gold watch when he retired.  
**was** He ..... when he retired
- The mother told her son off for shouting.  
**was** He ..... by his mother for shouting
- They are opening the new restaurant this evening.  
**is** The new restaurant ..... this evening



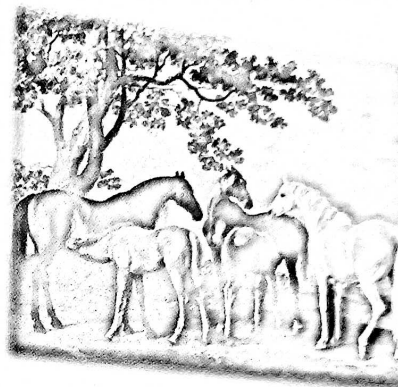
# Passive Voice / Causative Form

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She likes people taking her to the theatre. She likes being taken to the theatre.

## 7 Rewrite the following text in the passive.

Owen Gibbon has discovered a valuable oil painting in the attic of a house in Rochester. George Stubbs, the famous animal artist, painted the work in 1760. Mr Gibbon's great-grandfather bought the picture in the 1890's, but after his death the family stored it away in the attic. Art historians are examining the painting, and have valued it at £10,000. Mr Gibbon has offered the work to the National Gallery, where experts will restore the picture to its former beauty. They will have finished the restoration work by June.



## 3 Rewrite the following texts in the passive.

The Winter Production Company has finally released the film which the public has been waiting for for so long: *The Hawk*. The Winter Company was originally going to release the film in August but they decided to wait until October, as they know that fewer people go to the cinema in the summer. Richard Able directed *The Hawk* and critics are encouraging people to see it. Cinemas report that British audiences have bought a lot of tickets and that they are sure *The Hawk* will be a success.

Over the past ten years oil spills have polluted the seas surrounding Britain. The tankers spill oil onto the coast and this harms many forms of wildlife. Environmentalists say that they need a lot of volunteers if they are to minimise the damage. In future, the government has promised that it will prosecute the owners of any tankers that pollute the North Sea in this way. The government also hopes that they can prevent such incidents by building more lighthouses along the coastline.

## Oral Development 8



**A fire broke out yesterday at Chelsey. Look at the notes below, then report the incident. You may use ideas of your own. Use passive forms.**

- fire - department store - 11.00 pm last night
- passer-by notice flames 2nd floor
- call firefighters - try to put it out
- 2 night-watchmen trapped - taken to hospital
- now treated for 3rd degree burns
- half building destroyed
- reason for fire: electrical fault

**eg. A fire broke out at 11.00 pm last night. Flames were noticed on the 2nd floor by a passer-by ...**