



Notes on Passive Voice

INTRODUCTION

The passive of an active tense is formed by putting the verb **to be** into the same tense as the active verb and adding the past participle of the active verb. The subject of the active verb becomes the 'agent' of the passive verb. The agent is very often not mentioned. When it is mentioned it is preceded by **by** and placed at the end of the clause.

Active: My grandfather planted this tree.

Passive: This tree was planted by my grandfather

ACTIVE VOICE		PASSIVE VOICE
Present Simple	He delivers the letters.	The letters are delivered .
Past Simple	He delivered the letters.	The letters were delivered .
Future Simple	He will deliver the letters.	The letters will be delivered .
Present Continuous	He is delivering the letters.	The letters are being delivered .
Past Continuous	He was delivering the letters.	The letters were being delivered .
Going to	He is going to deliver the letters.	The letters are going to be delivered .
Present Perfect	He has delivered the letters.	The letters have been delivered .
Past Perfect	He had delivered the letters.	The letters had been delivered .
Infinitive	He has to deliver the letters.	The letters have to be delivered .
Modals	He must deliver the letters.	The letters must be delivered .

USE

The Passive is used:

1. when the **agent** (=the person who does the action) is **unknown, unimportant** or **obvious** from the context.

*Jane **was shot**. (We don't know who shot her.)*

*This church **was built** in 1815. (Unimportant agent)*

*He **has been arrested**. (Obviously by the police)*

2. to make more **polite** or **formal** statements.

*The car **hasn't been cleaned**. (more polite)*

(You haven't cleaned the car. – less polite)

3. when the **action is more important** than the agent, as in processes, instructions, events, reports, headlines, new items, and advertisements.

*30 people **were killed** in the earthquake.*

4. to put **emphasis on the agent**.

*The new library will be opened **by the Queen**.*



ACTIVE TO PASSIVE

To change a sentence from the active voice to the passive voice:

- the **object** of the active voice sentence becomes the **subject** of the passive voice sentence.

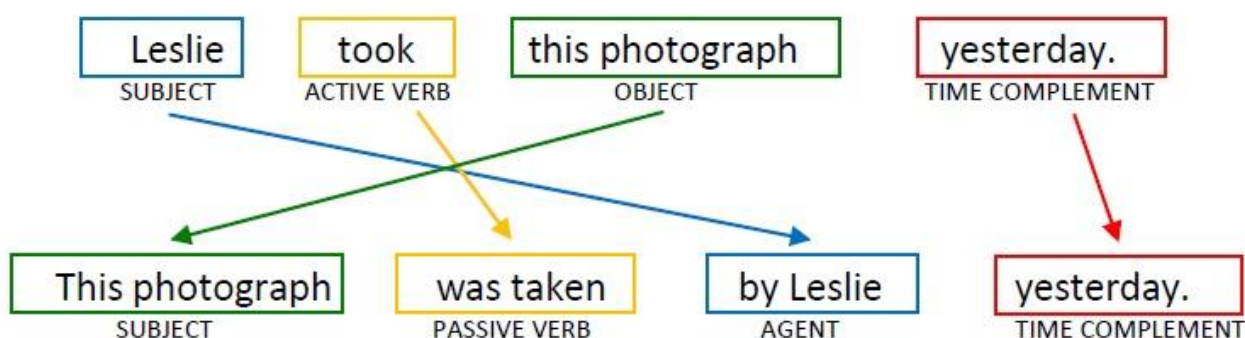
*Agatha Christie wrote **this book**.*

***This book** was written by Agatha Christie.*

- we change the main verb of the active voice sentence into the passive voice. The tense remains unchanged.
- the **subject** of the active voice sentence becomes the **agent** of the passive sentence. It is placed after the past participle and it is preceded by the preposition **by**.

Agatha Christie wrote this book.

*This book was written **by Agatha Christie**.*



DOUBLE OBJECT VERBS

When we have verbs that take two objects like, for example, **give somebody something**, we can convert the active sentence into a passive one in two ways:

- by making the **indirect** (animate) **object** the subject of the passive voice sentence, which is also the way that we usually prefer.
- By making the **direct** (inanimate) **object** the subject of the passive voice.

*Rick gave **me** (indirect object) **this book** (direct object).*

***I** was given this book by Rick.*

***This book** was given to me by Rick.*

Some of the verbs that take two objects are: **give, tell, send, show, bring, write, offer, pay**, etc.

When the indirect object is alone after the verb in the passive voice sentence, it needs the preposition **to**.

If the indirect object of the active voice sentence is a personal pronoun it has to be changed into a subject pronoun to be the subject of the passive voice sentence.



EXERCISES

1 Complete the chart with the words in the box.

is / are being be has / have been is / are to be was / were will / won't be

Tense	Form
Present simple passive	(0) <u>is / are</u> + past participle
Present continuous passive	(1) _____ + past participle
Past simple passive	(2) _____ + past participle
Present perfect passive	(3) _____ + past participle
Future simple passive	(4) _____ + past participle
Passive infinitive	(5) _____ + past participle
Modal + passive infinitive	(6) modal + _____ + past participle

2 Complete each sentence with the correct passive form of the verb.

- 1 Millions of people _____ (teach) English around the world. **Present continuous**
- 2 When I was young I _____ (call) 'Spider' by my friends. **Past simple**
- 3 Penguins can't _____ (find) at the North Pole. **Modal + Passive infinitive**
- 4 Don't worry! You _____ (not expect) to know all the answers. **Present simple**
- 5 I _____ (tell) I have a test next Thursday. **Present perfect**
- 6 Soon people _____ (not allow) to smoke in public. **Future simple**

3 Are these sentences correct (✓) or incorrect (✗)? Correct the sentences that are wrong.

- 1 English is spoke in Australia.
- 2 Electric cars will be used everywhere in the future.
- 3 Romeo and Juliet has been written by William Shakespeare.
- 4 I think you deserve to given another chance.
- 5 Computers are being used for more and more things.
- 6 Students won't be allowed to use computers in exams.
- 7 The rules for next year's competition should changed.
- 8 We want the twins to be taught separately.



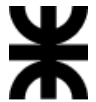
1. Choose the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

FIAT

Fiat **started/was started** by a group of Italian businessmen in 1899. In 1903, Fiat, **produced/was produced** 132 cars. Some of these cars **exported/were exported** by the company to the United States and Britain. In 1920, Fiat **started/was started** making cars at a new factory at Lingotto, near Turin. There was a track on the roof where the cars **tested/were tested** by technicians. In 1936, Fiat launched the Fiat 500. This car **called/was called** the Topolino – the Italian name for Mickey Mouse. The company grew, and in 1963 Fiat **exported/was exported** more than 300,000 vehicles. Today, Fiat is based in Turin, and its cars **sold/are sold** all over the world.

2. Make sentences in the passive in the given tense

1. BMW's – make – in Germany (PRESENT SIMPLE)
2. English – speak – in this shop (PRESENT SIMPLE)
3. The oldest house – build – in 1575 (PAST SIMPLE)
4. The bridge – repair – at the moment (PRESENT CONTINUOUS)
5. The trees – cut down – last winter (PAST SIMPLE)
6. The picture – paint – tomorrow (FUTURE SIMPLE)
7. When I came in – the TV – fix (PAST CONTINUOUS)
8. The cupboard – repair – recently (PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE)
9. The car – find – in the garage (PAST SIMPLE)
10. Breakfast – serve – between 7 and 9 (PRESENT SIMPLE)
11. The dog – call- Rover (PRESENT SIMPLE)
12. The meeting – hold – in my office (PAST CONTINUOUS)
13. The street – close – because of snow (PRESENT PERFECT)
14. The banks – close – in two days (FUTURE – SIMPLE)
15. Hundreds of books – write – every year (PRESENT SIMPLE)
16. After the accident – Joe – take – to the hospital (PAST SIMPLE)
17. The cap – find – in the corner (PAST SIMPLE)
18. The robber – not find – by the police – yet (PRESENT PERFECT)
19. The search – stop – this evening (FUTURE SIMPLE)
20. Different types of cameras – use (PRESENT CONTINUOUS)



3. Find the mistakes with the underlined verbs in the sentences below and correct them. Not every sentence has a mistake. If the sentence is correct, write C.

1. We went to see a movie.
2. I don't like scary movies. I can't be slept afterwards.
3. Did the movie directed by Steven Spielberg?
4. People in the audience are eaten popcorn.
5. The popcorn is fresh. It is been popped right now.
6. Popcorn sells in the lobby of the theater.
7. Before the movie, coming attractions are show.
8. At the end of the movie, we were left the theater and went home.
9. A lot of popcorn containers and candy wrappers was left on the floor of the theater.
10. Some movies can be enjoy by the whole family.
11. Tickets can bought online ahead of time.
12. What was happened? I can't find my ticket.
13. The theater is big. Fourteen movies are shown at the same time.
14. The movie is for adults. Children don't permitted to enter.
15. I enjoyed the movie. Did you?
16. Parking is free at the theater, but the parking pass must be validated in the theater.
17. Some movies should not seen by children.
18. Senior citizens can get a discount on tickets.
19. At the Oscar ceremony, the actors are arrived in limousines.
20. The actresses wear beautiful dresses.

6. Change the sentences to passive voice.

1. Many people begin new projects in January
2. You must wash that shirt for tonight's party.
3. Mum is going to prepare the food.
4. They make shoes in that factory.
5. We will have to examine you again.
6. They had finished preparations by the time the guests arrived.
7. The delegation will meet the visitors at the airport.



8. We have produced skis here since 1964.
9. All workers will read the memo.
10. Nobody can beat Tiger Woods at golf.
11. They also speak German at EU meetings.
12. We must look into the question.
13. Someone reads the newspaper to him every day.
14. The Chinese discovered acupuncture thousands of years ago.
15. Has he given you the book yet?
16. The police locked up the criminals.
17. They must have left the keys behind.
18. The robbers made up the story.
19. The boy is eating the cake.
20. Dad has bought a box of chocolates.
21. The spider scared her.
22. The guide will show us the Natural History Museum in the afternoon.
23. The dentist is cleaning the woman's teeth.
24. She showed her relatives the new house.

7. Turn the sentences into passive. Decide which object to use as subject in each case.

1. Tina gave me a very interesting book as a present.
2. The government granted lands to the people.
3. They offered a deal to the criminal who had blackmailed the President.