

## Reference: Passive Voice

### Formation:

- Verbs in English can be in the **active** or **passive** voice. The active voice is used when the subject is the "**doer**" of the action. The passive voice is used when the subject is the "**receiver**" of the action, the thing or person to which something happened.

ACTIVE VOICE:        Some students developed the plan.

SUBJECT	VERB/ACTION	OBJECT
<u>Some students</u>	developed	the plan.

Here the subject performs the action; it is the "doer" of the action.

PASSIVE VOICE:        The plan was developed by some students.

SUBJECT	VERB/ACTION	OBJECT
<u>The plan</u>	was developed	by some students.

Here the subject "receives" the action; it is the "receiver" of the action.

- The **passive verb form** is a form of the verb "**be**" + **the past participle** of the verb. The sentences below show how the passive voice is used in different tenses.

#### a) Simple Present

<u>Active:</u>	They <u>manufacture</u> radios in that factory.	What do they do in that factory? What is the factory for?
<u>Passive:</u>	Radios <u>are manufactured</u> in that factory. What is manufactured?	

#### b) Present Continuous

<u>Active:</u>	They <u>are showing</u> that movie in 10 theatres.	They show that movie in 10 theatres.
<u>Passive:</u>	That movie <u>is being shown</u> in 10 theatres.	That movie is shown in 10 theatres.

#### c) Simple Past

<u>Active:</u>	They <u>built</u> that hospital 10 years ago.
<u>Passive:</u>	That hospital <u>was built</u> 10 years ago.



d) **Past Continuous**

Active: We were discussing the plan when someone came in.  
Passive: The plan was being discussed when someone came in.

e) **Present Perfect**

Active: They have completed most of the work.  
Passive: Most of the work has been completed.

f) **Future**

Active: The company will spend money on training.  
Passive: Money will be spent on training.

g) **Modals**

The passive can be used with all the modals.

*Examples:* You must return the books in three weeks. (active)  
The books must be returned in three weeks. (passive)  
I can arrange a meeting. (active)  
A meeting can be arranged. (passive)

3. The three parts of a sentence in the passive voice are (a) the **subject** (the "receiver"), (b) the **verb**, and (c) the preposition "**by**" followed by the "**doer**" of the action. We can leave out part (c) if we don't know who or what did the action (the "doer"). Part (c) is also unnecessary when the "doer" is already known.

i) (a) The bridge (b) was designed (c) by an Italian architect.

ii) (a) The front window of the store (b) had been smashed.  
(We don't say "by \_\_\_\_" because we don't know who smashed it.)

iii) (a) Many kinds of fruit (b) are grown (c) in the Okanagan.  
(We don't say "by \_\_\_\_" because we already know that farmers grow them.)

Passive: The plan was being discussed when someone came in.

e) **Present Perfect**

Active: They have completed most of the work.

Passive: Most of the work has been completed.

f) **Future**

Active: The company will spend money on training.

Passive: Money will be spent on training.

g) **Modals**

The passive can be used with all the modals.

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I can arrange a meeting. (active)

A meeting can be arranged. (passive)

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(We don't say "by \_\_\_\_\_" because we don't know who smashed it.)

Passive: Most of the work has been completed.

f) **Future**

Active: The company will spend money on training.

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The passive can be used with all the modals.

*Examples:* You must return the books in three weeks. (active)

The books must be returned in three weeks. (passive)

I can arrange a meeting. (active)

A meeting can be arranged. (passive)

Passive: Money will be spent on training.

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The passive can be used with all the modals.

*Examples:* You must return the books in three weeks. (active)  
The books must be returned in three weeks. (passive)  
I can arrange a meeting. (active)  
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*Examples:* You must return the books in three weeks. (active)

The books must be returned in three weeks. (passive)

I can arrange a meeting. (active)

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3. The three parts of a sentence in the passive voice are (a) the **subject** (the "receiver"), (b) the **verb**, and (c) the preposition "**by**" followed by the "**doer**" of the action. We can leave out part (c) if we don't know who or what did the action (the "doer"). Part (c) is also unnecessary when the "doer" is already known.

i)                      (a)                      (b)                      (c)  
The bridge                      was designed                      by an Italian architect.

	(a)	(b)
ii)	The front window of the store	, had been smashed.
	(We don't say "by" because we don't know who smashed it.)	

	(a)	(b)	
iii)	Many kinds of fruit	are grown	in the Okanagan.
	(We don't say "by	" because we already know that farmers grow them.)	

**Meaning and Use:**

1. We use the passive voice when the "receiver" of the action is more important than the "doer" of the action.

*Example:*    active voice:

The CBC produced that movie. (The sentence is mainly about the CBC, the "doer" of the action.)

passive voice:

That movie was produced by the CBC. (The sentence is mainly about the movie, the "receiver" of the action.)

2. We often use the passive voice in newspaper writing, business and scientific reports and in descriptions of processes.

## Passive Voice

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the correct **voice** (active or passive) and the correct **tense** of the verb in parentheses.

*Example:* She forgot what I had told her.  
(forget)

1. The usher found me a seat just as the concert started.  
(find)
2. My aunt sent me a cheque last Christmas.  
(send)
3. It was a good thing nothing was stolen from my apartment since I had no insurance.  
(steal)
4. He married a woman from Fiji.  
(marry)
5. She quit her job over a pay dispute.  
(quit)
6. A strange man was seen near the factory just before the explosion.  
(see)
7. I introduced the new secretary to the rest of the staff.  
(introduce)
8. Mark will renovate the kitchen and dining room next summer.  
(renovate)
9. I'm quite sure an arrangement can be made to meet you at the airport.  
(can, make)
10. Everyone congratulated me when they heard the news.  
(congratulate)
11. I'm afraid that wisdom tooth must be taken out.  
(must, take out)
12. The machine was turned off automatically. You don't have to do anything.  
(turn off)
13. Sometimes bears can be found near garbage dumps.  
(can, find)

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the correct **tense** and **voice** of the verb in parentheses.

Fishermen and sailors sometimes claim to have seen monsters in the sea. People have often laughed at these stories, but scientists know that many of these (know)  
'monsters' which have been/are seen from time to time are simply strange fish. 1. (see)  
Occasionally, unusual creatures have been washed are washed onto the shore by the waves, 2. (wash)  
but so far very few have been caught are caught at sea. 3. (catch)

Some time ago, however, a peculiar fish was caught near Madagascar. A 4. (catch)  
small fishing boat was pulled miles out to sea by a powerful fish which 5. (pull)  
took had taken the bait on the fisherman's line. The fisherman 6. (take)  
realized that he had caught something strange, so he 7. (realize) 8. (catch)  
tried not to damage it in any way. When the creature 9. (try)  
was brought to shore, it was measured and 10. (bring) 11. (measure)  
was found to be over 13 feet long. It had a head like 12. (find) 13. (have)  
a horse, big blue eyes, a shining silver skin, and a bright red tail. It was sent 14. (send)  
to a museum where it was examined by a scientist. He identified it 15. (examine) 16. (identify)  
as an oarfish. Very few of these creatures have ever been seen because they 17. (ever, see)  
live at a depth of six hundred feet below the surface of the ocean. 18. (live)

Directions: In the blank spaces, use the correct form of the verb, along with an appropriate **modal (have to, must, should, ought to, may, might, can)**. Write in the **passive voice**.

*Example:* There's no hurry. The bill doesn't have to be paid until  
(not pay)  
the end of the year.

1. I think they must/should be punished for behaving so badly.  
(punish)
2. This dish has to/ must/ be eaten immediately or can be frozen  
(eat) (freeze)  
for later use.
3. Seat belts must/have to be fastened during take-off.  
(fasten)
4. This medicine must not be taken together with alcohol.  
(not, take)
5. The sign says that reference books must not/cannot be removed from the library.  
(not, remove)
6. Children have to/must be accompanied by an adult if they want to see this film.  
(accompany)
7. These sheets look clean enough, so they do not have to be washed.  
(not, wash)
8. We may be/might be given a raise later this year, but I'm not sure.  
(give)
9. Students will not be promoted unless they pass all portions of the test.  
(not, promote)
10. This knife looks dull. It ought to/ has to/ must be sharpened  
(sharpen)
11. Take your passport along, just in case. You might/may be asked for it at  
(ask)  
the border.
12. There is a chance of showers tomorrow, so the baseball game might/may be cancelled.  
(cancel)

**Directions:** Write a passage about wine-making by expanding the skeletal sentences into full-length sentences. Use the **passive voice** of the verbs in parentheses.

*Example:* Wine - (can - make) - many fruits - but - fruit - that - (use) - most often - grape.

Wine can be made from many fruits but, the fruit that is used most often is the grape.

1. Grapes - (grow) - and - wine - (drink) - many parts - world.

Grapes are grown and wine is drunk in many parts of the world.

2. The grapes - (check) - regularly - for - acid - sugar - content.

The grapes are checked regularly for acid sugar content.

3. They - (pick) - when - properly - (ripe) - by - sun.

They are picked when they are properly ripened by the sun.

4. Next - grapes - (place) - bins - and - bins - (lift) - large - trucks.

Next, the grapes are placed in bins and the bins are lifted onto large trucks.

5. The grapes - (transport) - place - where - they - (process).

The grapes are transported to a place where they are processed.

6. This - place - (call) - winery.

This place is called a winery.

7. Here - grapes - (crush) - rolling cylinders - and - juice - (remove).

Here, the grapes are crushed by rolling cylinders and the juice is removed.

8. The juice - (pump) - wooden vats.

The juice is pumped into wooden vats.

9. It - then - (ferment) - several months - years.

It is then fermented for several months or years.

10. Finally - it (put) - bottles - and - (send) - stores - where - it (sell).

Finally, it is put into bottles and sent to stores where it is sold.