

Grammar: The passive

- 13** You can use the passive (*be* + past participle) to introduce an argument or opinion. The impersonal subject *it* is often used. Study these examples.

It is often argued that communities are breaking down. (*it* + *be* + past participle + *that* ...)

Saint Petersburg is considered by many ***to be*** Russia's most beautiful city. (subject + *be* + past participle + *to* infinitive)

We use the passive if the performer of the action is unimportant or unknown.

Other verbs typical in this type of construction are *believe*, *say*, *think*, *find*, *claim*, *reported*, *prove*, and *show*. Example: *It has been conclusively shown that children benefit from a stable home environment.*

Decide if the following sentences can be rewritten in the passive. If so, rewrite them. (Note that none of the sentences below is incorrect and that the use of the passive is optional.)

- a People say that my local Italian is the best restaurant in town.
- b My mum thinks a country lifestyle is best.
- c They have found that the new canal is a flood risk.

- 14** Similar passive constructions can be used to introduce others' views. Then you can say why you do not agree.

Although the city's National Gallery ***is*** often ***thought to be*** the most interesting gallery, ***I prefer*** the Modern Art Gallery.

It could be argued that cities are dangerous places, ***but I think*** that if you're streetwise that needn't be the case.

Complete the sentences below so they are true for you.

- a Although _____ is usually considered to be the most beautiful region in my country, I _____.
- b Home cooking/Restaurant food is often thought to be superior to restaurant food/home cooking, but, in my opinion, _____.
- c It could be argued that it is better to live in the city/country than in the country/city, but I _____.

- 15** You can also form the passive with *get* + past participle. This is more informal than the passive with *be*. We can use *get* to express misfortune or something unexpected:

I got made redundant last month.

or to express an achievement:

I got accepted into university.

In which sentences below are we likely to use a form of *get*?

- a I was talking to the gas company but I **was** cut off.
- b My dad **was** elected as leader of the local council.
- c The town centre **is being** regenerated.