Passive 3

A

I was offered ... / we were given ... etc.

Some verbs can have two objects. For example, **give**:
- Somebody gave **the police the information**. (= somebody gave the information to the police)

object 1   object 2

So it is possible to make two passive sentences:
- **The police** were given the information. *or*
  The information was given to the police.

Other verbs which can have two objects are:
ask   offer   pay   show   teach   tell

When we use these verbs in the passive, most often we begin with the *person*:
- **I've been offered** the job, but I don't think I'll accept it. (= they have offered me the job)
- **You will be given** plenty of time to decide. (= we will give you plenty of time)
- I didn't see the original document but **I was shown** a copy. (= somebody showed me.)
- Tim has an easy job – **he's paid** a lot of money to do very little. (= they pay him a lot)

B

I don't like being ...

The passive of **doing/seeing** etc. is **being done / being seen** etc. Compare:

active   I don't like **people telling me** what to do.
passive   I don't like **being told** what to do.

- I remember **being taken** to the zoo when I was a child.
  (= I remember somebody taking me to the zoo)
- Steve hates **being kept** waiting. (= he hates people keeping him waiting)
- We managed to climb over the wall without **being seen**. (= without anybody seeing us)

C

I was born ...

We say 'I **was** born ...' (*not* I am born):
- I **was born** in Chicago.   } *past*
- Where **were** you **born**? (*not* Where are you born?)

but
- How many babies **are born** every day?   *present*

D

Get

You can use **get** instead of **be** in the passive:
- There was a fight at the party, but nobody **got hurt**. (= nobody **was** hurt)
- I don't **get invited** to many parties. (= I'm not invited)
- I'm surprised Liz **didn't get offered** the job. (= Liz **wasn't offered** the job)

We use **get** only when things *happen*. For example, you cannot use **get** in these sentences:
- Jessica **is liked** by everybody. (*not* gets liked – this is not a 'happening')
- Peter was a mystery man. Very little **was known** about him. (*not* got known)

We use **get** mainly in informal spoken English. You can use **be** in all situations.

We also use **get** in the following expressions (which are not passive in meaning):
get married, get divorced   **get dressed** (= put on your clothes)
get lost (= not know where you are)   **get changed** (= change your clothes)