

GRAMMAR

# Passive voice

**LEVEL**

Intermediate (B1)

**NUMBER**

EN\_B1\_1092G

**LANGUAGE**

English



## Learning outcomes

- I can distinguish between active and passive sentences in English.
- I can accurately use the passive voice with a verb in the present and past simple.



# Warm-up

1. **Read** the quotes below.
2. **Answer** the questions in the red boxes as a class or in breakout rooms.

“

**Pop singer is awarded  
Grammy for latest album.**

“

**Mountain climbers were  
found safe and in good  
condition after three-day  
search.**

Where might you read  
these kinds of  
sentences?

Do these sentences  
tell us...

...who awarded the  
singer the Grammy?

...who found the  
mountain climbers?

What is the top news  
story in your country  
today?





# Huge Quake Rocks Greece and Turkey

1. **Read** the text below.
2. **Answer** the questions in the red box.

A large earthquake has hit parts of Greece and Turkey this evening. The earthquake, measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale, was first recorded just before 6 p.m. local time.

Although this part of Europe is often affected by earthquakes, this evening's quake is considered to be one of the worst in recent years and hundreds of people are feared dead.

A large team of volunteers has been helping to rescue people from under the rubble. Just a few moments ago, a five-year-old girl was rescued from a church building to loud applause. Authorities are hoping more survivors will be found, as search and rescue operations continue throughout the night.

1. What major event has happened in Greece and Turkey?
2. What are the volunteers currently doing?



The earthquake was  
recorded just before 6 p.m.  
**local time.**



What is the **local time** where you are?



# Vocabulary

A large earthquake has **hit** parts of Greece and Turkey.



It's considered to be the worst earthquake **in recent years**.



Search operations will continue **throughout** the night.



Can you think of some countries which are **hit** regularly by earthquakes?

Can you tell the class about a major event which happened in your country **in recent years**?

Can you think of any places which are warm **throughout** the year?

# Looking at the active voice

1. **Read** the example sentences below.
2. **Answer** the questions.
3. Then **fill in** the gaps.

The woman rescues the girl.

An earthquake destroyed the house.

- What is the **verb** in each sentence?
- What is the **subject** in each sentence? (*Hint: who or what does the action?*)
- What is the **object** in each sentence? (*Hint: who or what receives the action?*)

- **Sentence 1** uses the \_\_\_\_\_ simple tense.
- **Sentence 2** uses the \_\_\_\_\_ simple tense.

# Comparing active with passive voice

1. **Look** at the two pairs of sentences below.
2. Then, **review** the information in the blue boxes.

**The woman**  
**rescues** **the girl**



**The girl** **is rescued**  
**(by the woman)**

**An earthquake**  
**destroyed** **the house**



**The house** **was destroyed**  
**(by an earthquake)**

- The **object** of an active sentence becomes the subject in a passive sentence (**the girl, the house**).
- The **subject** of an active sentence does not need to appear in a passive sentence (**the woman, an earthquake**).
- The **subject** of an active sentence can go at the end of a passive sentence.

We form the passive using:

- the auxiliary verb **to be** + **past participle**.  
The tense of the auxiliary verb tells us which passive tense it is.
- We add the **preposition** \_\_\_\_\_ before the subject of the active sentence if we want to include it in the passive sentence.





# Active or passive?

1 This part of Europe is often affected by earthquakes.

a. active

b. passive

2 A large storm reached the shores of Florida last night.

a. active

b. passive

3 An injured woman was taken out from under a fallen tree.

a. active

b. passive



## Active or passive?

4 The rescuers were described as very brave for their actions.

a. active

b. passive

5 Many countries aren't sending enough teams of volunteers to help.

a. active

b. passive

6 Was the earthquake expected or not?

a. active

b. passive



# Categorise the sentences

**Look at the sentences below.**

Decide if each one uses the active or passive voice. Can you identify the verbs, subjects and objects in each one?

An earthquake struck Turkey.

A French director didn't make the films.

Is he considered a good person by his team?

The man cooked a meal.

Turkey was struck by an earthquake.

I'm not allowed to work weekends.

Does his team consider him a good person?

The films weren't made by a French director.

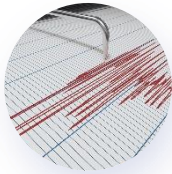
My boss doesn't allow me to work weekends.

The meal was cooked by the man.

**Active**

**Passive**

# Using the passive voice



The earthquake **was** first **recorded** just before 6 p.m. local time.



A five-year-old girl **was** **rescued** from a church building.

- We use a passive verb form when we want the **object of the verb** in the active sentence to become the main focus.
- **In sentence 1**, is the time of the earthquake or who recorded it more important?
- **In sentence 2**, do we know who rescued the girl? Why is this not important?

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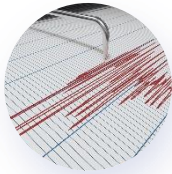
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# Using *by* to emphasise



The earthquake **was** first **recorded** just before 6 p.m. **by the Turkish geological survey.**



A five-year-old girl **was** **rescued** from a church building **by a group of volunteers.**

- Look at the parts in purple that we have added to the sentences.
- What **extra information** do they tell us?
- Can you transform each sentence back into an active sentence?

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# Build past passive sentences

Use the words in the boxes below to build past passive sentences. Be sure to include the verb *was/were* and the preposition *by* in each of your sentences.

1 the city – flooded – heavy rainfall



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2 more than a thousand homes – destroyed – the hurricane



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3 my house – built – my grandfather



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4 my favourite book – written – Charles Dickens



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5 an injured girl – saved – some volunteers



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# Transform the sentences

**Transform the sentences below from active into passive voice.** You can choose to include the subject of the active sentence in the passive sentence or not.

- 1

Extreme weather doesn't often affect this part of Europe.

>
- 2

Many people often use that book.

>
- 3

The government sent a large rescue team.

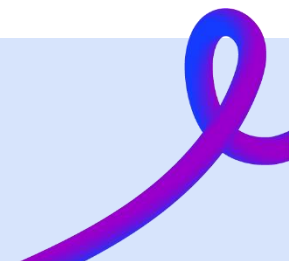
>
- 4

This natural disaster really shocked me.

>
- 5

Did somebody hurt you?

>





# Using the passive voice

**Pick one of the following questions.** Answer it using the passive voice. Ask your teacher or your classmates for help if you're not sure of the answer.



What is something in the news that shocked you recently?

What's your favourite building in your city?  
Who built it and when?

What's your favourite book? Who wrote it  
and when did they publish it?

What's your favourite film? Who directed it  
and when did it come out?



# What happened here?

Use the passive voice to talk about what happened in the picture.

Who caused it? What was the impact? Who did it affect?

Don't forget that **you can use the preposition *by*** to give more information or add emphasis.







# End of the lesson

Idiom

***Charity begins at home.***

**Meaning:** you should take care of your family and those people who are close to you before helping other people who aren't so close to you.



# Additional practice



# Match the active and passive sentences

Match the active sentences on the left with the passive sentences on the right that have the same meaning.

1 An earthquake struck our city.

2 The doctors saw to the injured.

3 Earthquakes often affect this part of Europe.

4 The earthquake destroyed more than a thousand homes.

5 Some volunteers rescued the people from under a fallen down building.

a The injured were seen to by the doctors.

b More than a thousand homes were destroyed by the earthquake.

c The people were rescued from under a fallen down building by some volunteers.

d Our city was struck by an earthquake.

e This part of Europe is often affected by earthquakes.



# Correct the sentences

1



**Our city was strike by an earthquake.**

2



**The injured people saw to by the doctors.**

3



**This part of Europe often affected by earthquakes.**

4



**More than a thousand homes were destroyed the earthquake.**



## Describing an event



### **Describe an event using the passive voice**

**Describe any event from your past that  
affected you a lot. Don't forget to use the  
passive voice.**





# Build sentences

**Build sentences in the passive voice** (in the **present and past simple tenses**) by using a subject from the first box and a past participle with the rest of the sentence from the second box.

*Our flights were cancelled because of the fog.*

*All taxes...*



## Subject

- flights
- taxes
- we
- buildings
- room
- clothes
- five hundred people

## Past participle & rest of sentence

- cancelled because of the fog
- included in the price
- warned not to go out alone
- destroyed by the fire
- cleaned once a day
- not worn anymore
- employed by the company



# Dialogue

**You and your friend are talking about a natural disaster that has just happened.** One of you is asking what happened, while the other has witnessed the incident and is answering the questions. You can change the situation for every question and answer.



*How many people were involved in the incident?*

*Two hundred people...*



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Write a news article

**Write a news article** about a natural disaster that happened a few moments ago or very recently. **Use the passive voice** in the **present simple** and **past simple tenses**.

A hurricane swept across Florida yesterday night. Hundreds were killed...



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# Answer key

## P.4

1. An earthquake has hit parts of Greece and Turkey.
2. The volunteers are helping to rescue people from the rubble.

## P.7

1. verbs: rescues; destroyed
2. subjects: the woman; an earthquake
3. objects: the girl; the house.
4. present; past

## P.8

by

**P.9-10** 1. (b) 2. (a) 3. (b) 4. (b) 5 (a) 6. (b)

## P.11

**Active:** An earthquake struck. (**subject:** An earthquake; **verb:** struck); A French director didn't make the films. (**subject:** A French director; **verb:** make; **object:** the films); The man cooked a meal. (**subject:** The man; **verb:** cooked; **object:** a meal); Does his team consider him a good person? (**subject:** his team; **verb:** consider; **object:** him); My boss doesn't allow me to work weekend. (**subject:** My boss; **verb:** allow; **object:** me); I'm not allowed to work weekends. (**subject:** I; **verb:** allowed);



# Answer key

## P.11

**Passive:** Is he considered a good person by his team? (**subject:** the team; **verb:** considered; **object:** he); Turkey was struck by an earthquake. (**subject:** an earthquake; **verb:** struck; **object:** Turkey); The films weren't made by a French director. (**subject:** French director; **verb:** made; **object:** The films); The meal was cooked by the man. (**subject:** the man; **verb:** cooked; **object:** The meal).

## P.12

1. the time is more important
2. We don't know and the rescue as an event is more important

## P.13

1. They tell us who performed the action of 'recording' or 'rescuing'
2. The Turkish geological survey first recorded the earthquake just before 6 p.m.
3. A group of volunteers rescued a five-year-old girl from a church building.





# Answer key

## P.14

1. The city was flooded by heavy rainfall.
2. More than a thousand homes were destroyed by the hurricane
3. My house was built by my grandfather
4. My favourite book was written by Charles Dickens.
5. An injured girl was saved by some volunteers.

## P.15

1. This part of Europe isn't affected [by extreme weather].
2. That book is often used [by many people].
3. A large rescue team was sent [by the government].
4. I was really shocked [by this natural disaster].
5. Were you hurt [by somebody]?



# Answer key

## Additional practice

### P.21

1.(d) 2.(a) 3.(e) 4.(b) 5.(c)

### P.22

1. was **struck**
2. **were seen** to
3. **is** often affected
4. were destroyed **by** the earthquake



# Summary

## Active voice

- (the subject performs the verb's action): The earthquake destroyed more than a thousand homes.

## Passive voice

- (the subject receives the verb's action): More than a thousand homes were destroyed by the earthquake.

## Passive voice in the present simple:

- This area of Europe is often affected by earthquakes.

## Passive voice in the past simple:

- The earthquake was first reported just after 6 a.m. local time.

## Using *by* to emphasise or give more information:

- More than a thousand homes were destroyed by the tremors.



# Vocabulary

natural disaster

victim

to support

earthquake

to strike

to report

a.m.

incident

tremor

volunteering team

to rescue

ruddle

volunteer

to hit

local time

in recent years

throughout



## Notes