

# Advanced uses of the passive voice

GRAMMAR

LEVEL  
Intermediate

NUMBER  
EN\_BE\_3312G

LANGUAGE  
English

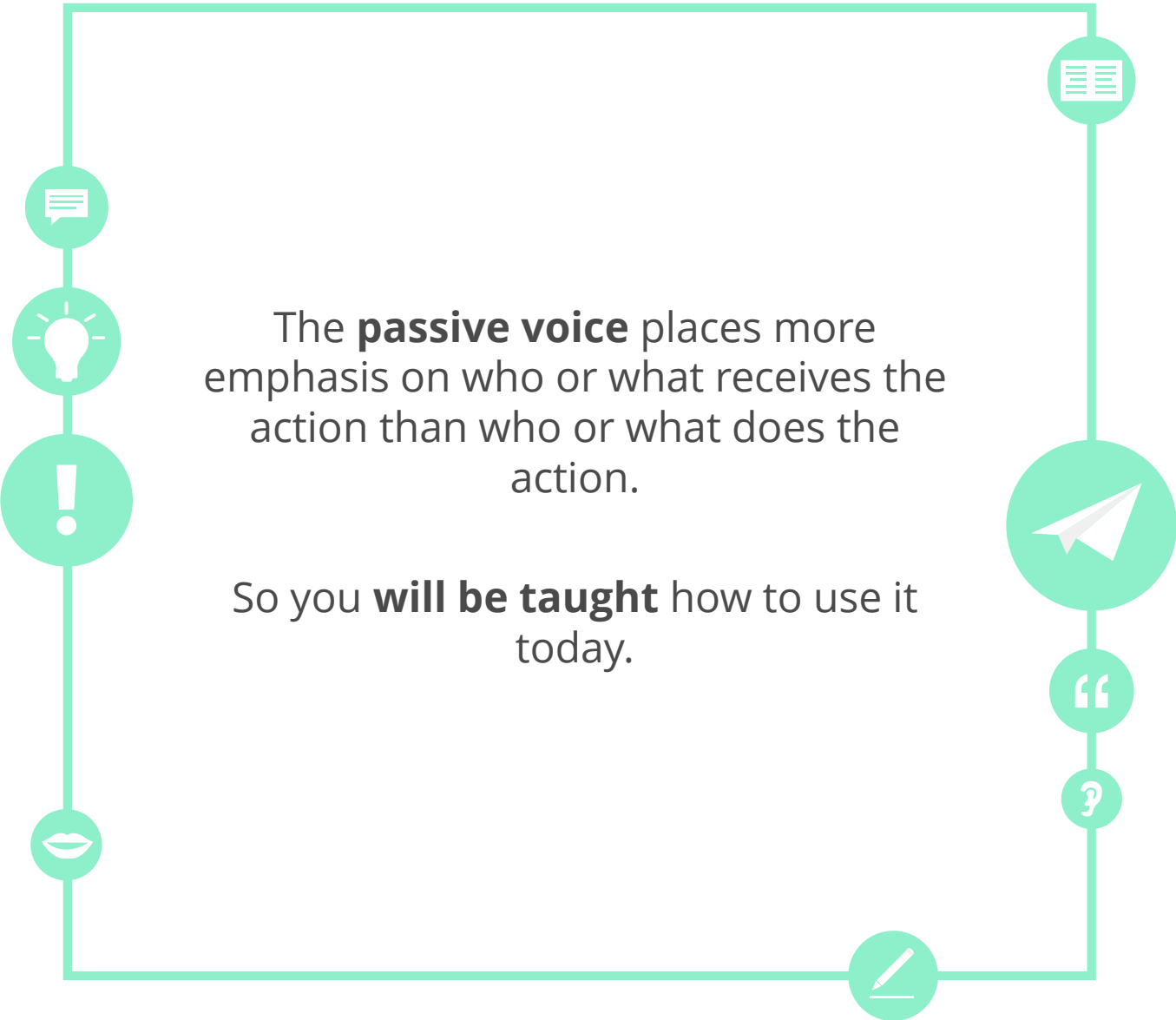




## Goals

- Can explain when to use the passive voice and compare it to the active voice.
- Can form more complex sentences using the passive voice.





The **passive voice** places more emphasis on who or what receives the action than who or what does the action.

So you **will be taught** how to use it today.



## Preview and warm-up

- In this lesson you are going to **review** how to use the **passive voice** and learn more about how to use it in **complex tenses**.



The product **will be delivered** soon.



## Reviewing the passive voice

- Below are some examples of **active** and **passive sentences** in the **present simple** and the **past simple**.
- Remember, the **passive voice** is formed using the verb **be** in the appropriate tense and the **past participle** of the main verb.

Active	Passive
People speak English in Australia.	English is spoken in Australia.
Elena took the minutes at today's meeting.	The minutes of today's meeting were taken by Elena.
People eat turkey at Christmas in the UK.	Turkey is eaten at Christmas in the UK.





## Reviewing the passive voice

Here are some more examples of **passive sentences** in different tenses.

Present continuous	Past simple	Present perfect
The problem is being handled by the customer service team.	Our suggestions were implemented.	A meeting has been arranged for next Wednesday.
My car is being fixed.	The assignment was sent out to the freelancers.	Houses have been built on the land we used to play on.
Lunch is being served in the canteen	Linda was given a promotion.	The project has finally been completed.



## Reviewing the passive voice

Here are some more **passive structures** in other tenses.

Past continuous	Past perfect
A dog was being chased by a large cat.	He had been warned about his behaviour before.
A man was being held hostage while the police negotiated.	She was angry because she had just been fired from the job she loved.
Dinner was being served when the plane hit turbulence.	They had been touted as the next big thing but they never made it.



## The preposition *by*

We can use the **passive voice** with or without *by*.

- We use *by* when we want to say who **does the action**.
- We do not use *by* when we **do not know/can't say** who **performs** an action or when it is **obvious** who or what **performs** an action.

Look at the examples below and discuss why *by* was or wasn't used.

A man was arrested.

The clothes are made by children who work very long hours.

My car has been stolen.

The court was told that the accused was seen in the area.

The contract was not signed by my boss.

The notes were written by Joshua.







## Transform the sentences from active to passive

1. The police arrested the man.



The man was arrested (by the police).

2. People in Britain send 350 million letters every year.



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Nora has conducted the research for this report.



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. A co-worker is reviewing Nora's report.



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. They had already eaten all the cookies when I arrived.



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## The preposition *by*

Discuss why you did or didn't use *by* in the sentences on the previous page.



## Fill in the gaps

Choose the passive or active voice in this text.

Alice Hancock \_\_\_\_\_ (give) her first piano by her parents when she was 6. They thought it \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a big gift for a young girl but they \_\_\_\_\_ (convince) by her piano teacher, who \_\_\_\_\_ (tell) them that their daughter was a genius. Unfortunately, Alice \_\_\_\_\_ (not touch) the piano the first week she had it. However, Alice's brother Mike \_\_\_\_\_ (turn out) to be a prodigy, and he \_\_\_\_\_ (play) the piano every day until he \_\_\_\_\_ (enter) for a musical competition by Alice's teacher. He \_\_\_\_\_ (win), and from then on the piano belonged to him.





## The passive voice with the future simple

Here is how we construct and use the **passive voice** with the **future simple**:

- ***will be* + past participle**

Active	Passive
We will finish the project by noon.	The project will be finished by noon.
She will give a speech on time management.	A speech will be given on time management.
An expert will demonstrate how to use the new product.	How to use the new product will be demonstrated by an expert.



## The passive voice with the future perfect

Here is how we construct and use the **passive voice** with the **future perfect**:

- ***will have been* + past participle**

Active	Passive
We will have implemented all the changes by the deadline.	The changes will all have been implemented by the deadline.
I hope the real estate agent will have sold our house by next month.	I hope our house will have been sold by next month.
We will have released the product by next month.	The product will have been released by next month.



## To be born

- One of the most **common verbs** which is used in the **passive voice** is *to be born*.
- It is often used in the **past tense**, but can be used in **others**.

### *To be born*

I was born in 1980.

One baby is born every 40 seconds in the UK.

Seven babies will have been born by the time my shift finishes tonight!

Your baby will be born soon.

Over 100 babies have been born in this hospital so far this year.





## Verbs that can't be used in the passive voice



- **Intransitive verbs** (those without an object) **cannot** be used in the **passive voice**.
- Some **stative verbs** can also not be used in the passive.  
Look at the examples below.

- He has arrived.
- John has a sister and a brother.
- Did you cycle here?
- I will sleep well tonight.
- This bag belongs to Helen.



## Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps with one of the verbs below in the future simple or the future perfect.

send

finish

hold

tell

sell

1. The meeting \_\_\_\_\_ next Tuesday.
2. If the court convicts you, you \_\_\_\_\_ to prison.
3. Our product \_\_\_\_\_ in Europe and Asia.
4. The report \_\_\_\_\_ by tomorrow morning.
5. The staff \_\_\_\_\_ about the new management in this afternoon's meeting.







## What is it?

I **am found** at one of the poles but not the other.

My habitat **is being destroyed**.

People say I **will become** extinct if we don't act soon.



## Who/what am I?

Using the previous page as a model, choose three more animals or people that you can describe in three sentences.

Try to use the passive voice in the sentences you create.

A blank sheet of lined paper with a spiral binding on the left side, intended for writing.





## To be born

**Answer the questions below with your classmates.**



1

When and where were you born?

2

Are any babies going to be born in your family soon?

3

Where were your parents and grandparents born?



## The passive in formal writing

As you probably remember, we often use the **passive voice** in **formal writing**.  
Look at the examples of sentences below.

The results of the experiment have not yet been examined.

The theory of evolution was first formulated by Charles Darwin.

Staff were observed during their working hours and their movements were measured.





## The passive with *get*

- There is another more **informal** side to the **passive voice** and that is when it is used with ***get***. This is used in **spoken** language.
- Look at the examples below of a normal passive construction and the passive with ***get***. The structure is: **subject + *get* + past participle**.

Passive with <i>be</i>	Passive with <i>get</i>
My findings were confirmed by an expert in the field.	My findings got confirmed by an expert in the field.
My absence was approved by my boss.	My absence got approved by my boss.



## Get or be

Fill in the gaps with the passive voice using *get* or *be* depending on which you think is more appropriate.

1. Did you hear that Dave \_\_\_\_\_ (arrest) last night?
2. A man aged 24 \_\_\_\_\_ (arrest) last night on suspicion of burglary.
3. John Parker \_\_\_\_\_ (fire) for stealing money from the firm.
4. John \_\_\_\_\_ (fire) for taking money!





What needs to be done?

**What projects are you working on at the moment? What needs to be done by the end of this month? Share your response with the class using the passive voice.**



## True or false?

Fill in the gaps with passive verbs.

1. The first canned beer \_\_\_\_\_ (sell) in 1933.
2. The first European Championship football tournament \_\_\_\_\_ (hold) in 1960.
3. Up to the year 2000, almost 2 million pairs of Levi's jeans \_\_\_\_\_ (sell).
4. The first car \_\_\_\_\_ (invent) by an American.
5. George Washington \_\_\_\_\_ (elect) President of the United States in 1789.



Now say if you think the sentences are true or not.





## Writing

**Write answers to these questions using the passive voice.**

Who are the best electronics made by?

Who are your favourite clothes made  
by?

Where are the worst cars  
manufactured?

A spiral-bound notebook with blank lined pages for writing answers.



## Reflect on the goals

Go back to the second slide of the lesson and check if you have achieved all the goals of the lesson.

yes

no





## Reflect on this lesson

Think about everything you have seen in this lesson.  
What were the most difficult activities or words? The easiest?



If you have time, go over  
the most difficult slides again



## Answer key

### Exercise p. 9

2. 350 million letters are sent in Britain every year.
3. The research for this report was conducted by Nora.
4. Nora's report is being reviewed by a co-worker.
5. The cookies had already been eaten when I arrived.

### Exercise p. 11

was given, was, were convinced, had told/told, didn't touch, turned out, played, was entered, won

### Exercise p. 16

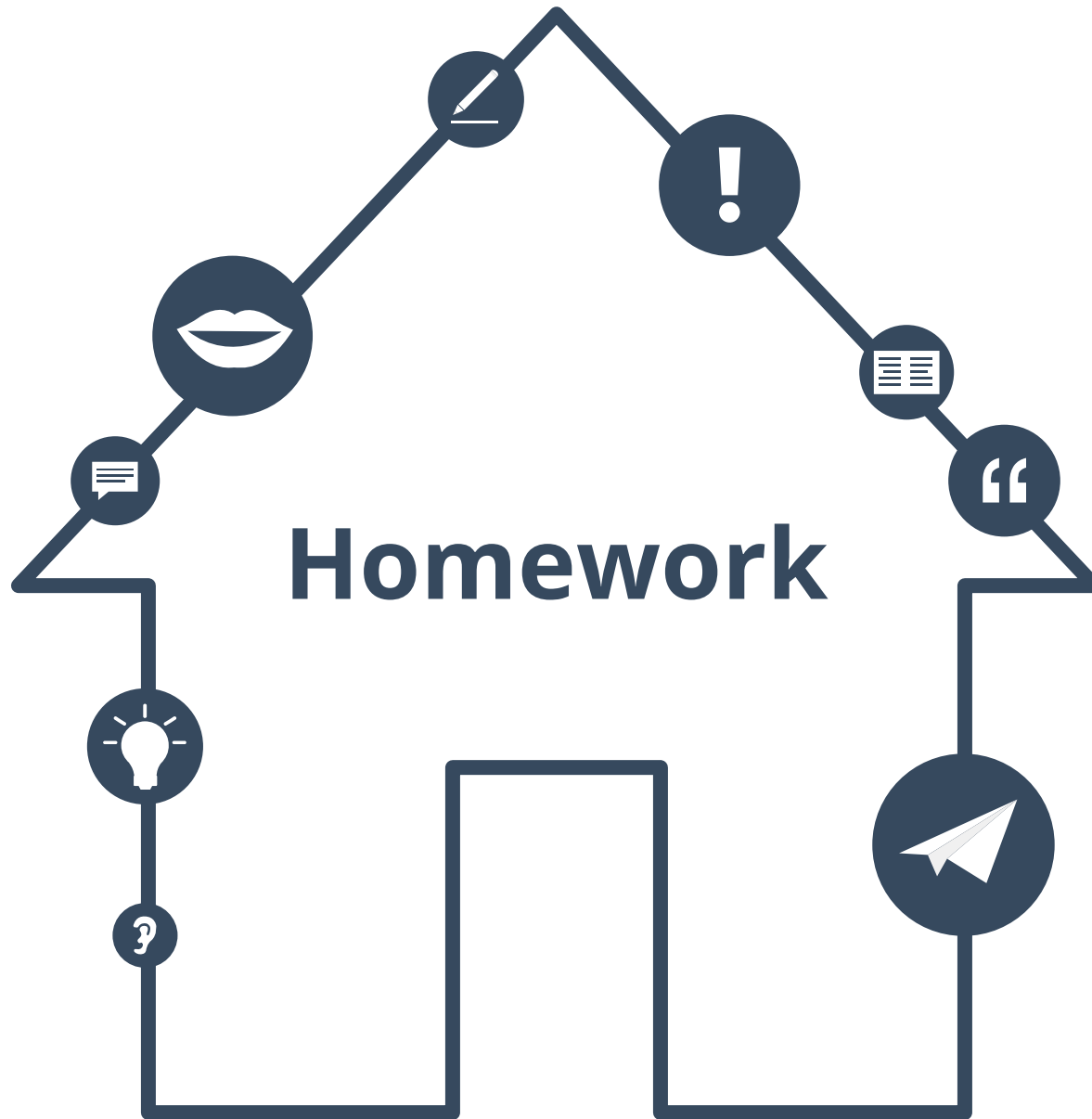
1. will be held, 2. will be sent, 3. will be sold, 4. will have been finished, 5. will be told

### Exercise p. 24

1. was sold (T)
2. was held, (T)
3. had been sold (F – 2 billion pairs)
4. was invented (F – a German)
5. was elected (T)

### Exercise p. 22

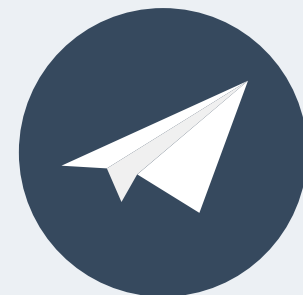
1. Got arrested, 2. was arrested, 3. was fired, 4. got fired





Complete the table with the past participle of the verbs

give	given
go	
have	
see	
eat	
become	
suspend	
feel	
fell	





## Complete the sentences

**Complete the sentences so they are true for you.**

1. A great present I was given...
2. A meal I have been cooked by someone was ...
3. My favourite book was written by...
4. My favourite film was directed by...
5. Something I am annoyed by...



## Homework answer key

### Exercise p. 30

gone/been, had, seen, eaten, become, suspended, felt, fallen





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