

GRAMMAR

# The passive

**LEVEL**

Elementary (A2)

**NUMBER**

EN\_A2\_2103G

**LANGUAGE**

English

## Learning outcomes

- I can explain the difference between the active and passive voice.
- I can accurately use the passive voice in the present and past simple.



## Warm-up

**What is this  
device used for?**

**Share your answer with the  
rest of the class!**





**It is said** that many fears and phobias begin at a young age.

**It is said** is an impersonal passive construction.

We use it before a statement when we don't know the source of the information, and don't want to present it as a fact!

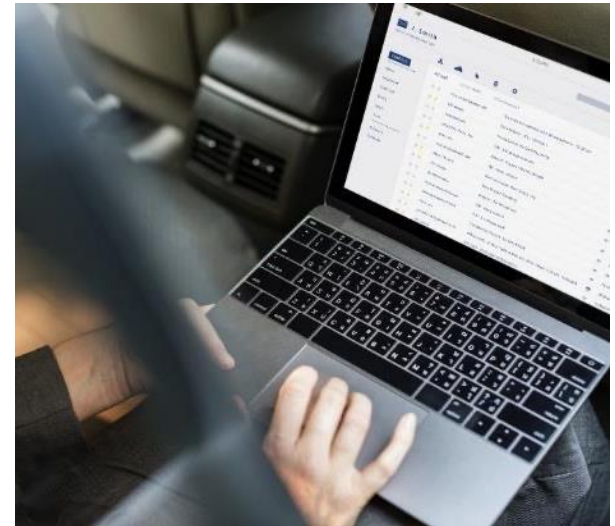


# Understanding the passive

1. **Read** the sentences.
2. **Review** the information in the blue box below.

**My laptop was designed** in the USA.  
**It is connected** to the internet.  
**It is used** for work.

- **Passive sentences** focus on **what happens** to someone or something.
- The **passive voice** shifts the focus from the **subject** to the **object** of the sentence.
- The **passive voice** is often used when the person doing the action is either **obvious** or **unimportant**.



# Comparing the active and the passive

- **Active** sentences always tell us **who** or **what** performs an action. **Passive** sentences do not.
- The **object** of the active sentence is the **subject** of the passive sentence.

## active present simple

I **update** **my laptop** every week.

People **use** **emails** for communication.

Workers **make** **computers**.

## passive present simple

**My laptop** **is updated** every week.

**Emails** **are used** for communication.

**Computers** **are made**.

# Forming the passive in the present tense

- The **present simple** form of the passive is formed from the present tense of the verb **to be** + **the past participle**.

The question

is

asked.

The questions

are

asked.

The class

is

taught.

The classes

are

taught.



# Reviewing the past participle

- To form the passive, you always need the verb **to be** + **the past participle**.
  - **The past participle** of **regular** verbs is formed by adding **-ed**.
  - **The past participle** of many common verbs is **irregular**.

infinitive	past participle
start	started
buy	bought
find	found
take	taken
drink	drunk





# Give the past participle of these verbs

give

know

see

write

make

use

sell

build

grow

speak

# Stating the agent in the passive

- Use **by** to introduce the **agent** in a passive sentence.
- The agent can be **a person** or **a thing**.
- You can leave out the agent in a passive sentence, but not in an active sentence.

## active

**She** wrote the book.

**Fire** destroyed the building

**Workers** make computers.

## passive

The book **was written** (by her).

The building **was destroyed** (by fire).

Computers **are made** (by workers).



# Transform the sentences

**Transform** the active sentences into passive ones.

1 The dog bites the man.



*The man is bitten (by the dog).*

2 He drives his daughter to school.



3 The policeman stops the speeding car.



4 She asks a question.



5 They open the door.



6 We eat the pizza.



# Fill in the gaps

Fill in the **gaps** with the word that fits best.

1. The internet \_\_\_\_\_ used by billions of people around the world.
2. New technology is \_\_\_\_\_ every day.
3. Many electronic products are \_\_\_\_\_ in Asia.
4. Most apps \_\_\_\_\_ updated frequently.
5. Physical books and print media are still \_\_\_\_\_.
6. E-readers are now also \_\_\_\_\_ to read books digitally.



used

made

is

are

developed

published

# What is modern technology used for?

Use the pictures below for inspiration or create your own examples!



...is used for... (*+ing*)



...is used to (*+infinitive*)

# Forming the passive in the past tense

- The **past simple** passive is formed from the **past simple** of the verb **to be** + **past participle**.

The question

was

asked.

The questions

were

asked.

The class

was

taught.

The classes

were

taught.





# Unscramble the words

was

new

yesterday

delivered

sofa

the



in

hospital

patient

treated

the

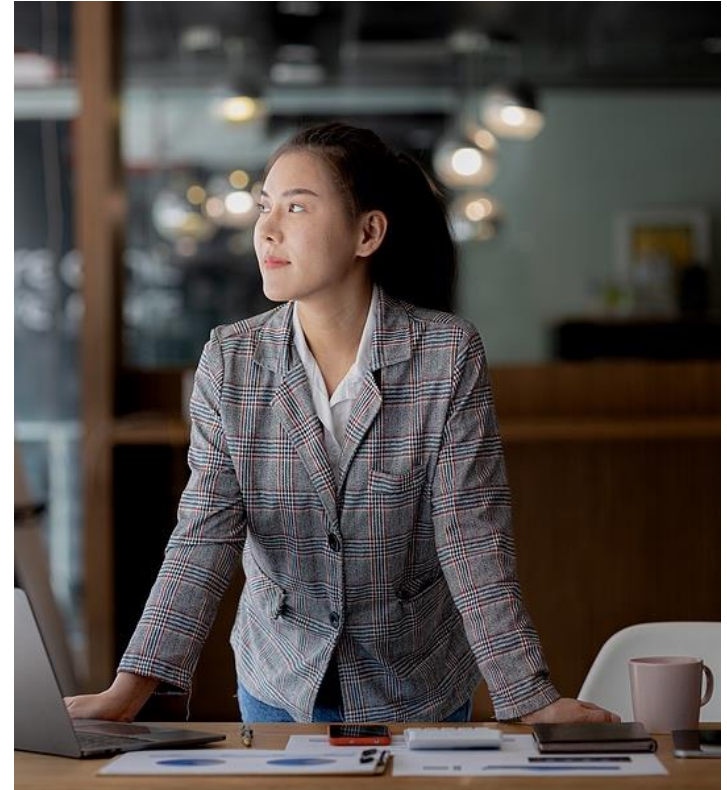
was



# Technology in your own life

In breakout rooms or together as a class, **answer** the questions below.

- 1 What technology did you use a lot as a child?
- 2 Is this technology still used nowadays?
- 3 What technology do you use most in your everyday life?





# Active or passive voice?

1. **Read** the sentences.
2. **Decide** if they are *active* or *passive*.

		active	passive
1	The man was arrested by the police.		
2	The police arrested him at midnight.		
3	These houses were built by the local government.		
4	Euros are not accepted in every country.		
5	The books were ordered yesterday.		



# Find out more about your classmates

1. **Ask** another classmate questions about the country they are from.
2. **Use** the questions below for inspiration or create your own.
3. Then **respond** to their questions.

1 What famous books were written there?

2 What language is spoken there?

3 What foods are typically eaten?

4 What technology was invented there?





# End of the lesson

Idiom

***(to hear it) through the grapevine***

**Meaning:** to learn something through friends; to hear a rumour (something you are not sure is true)

**Example:** I heard through the grapevine that our favourite wine bar is closing. I hope it's not true!





# Additional practice



# Transform the sentences

**Transform** the sentences into the passive.



1 Farmers in England grow wheat.



Wheat is grown in England (by farmers).

2 People in England speak English.



3 Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*.



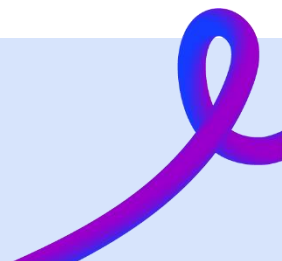
4 She sang a hit song.



5 We ate all the food.



6 You wrote the poem.





# What am I?

1. **Think** of an object.
2. **Describe it** in three sentences beginning with *I am*.
3. **Include** at least one passive sentence.
4. Your classmates will **guess** what you are.



*I am found under the Earth's surface.*

*I am black and sticky.*

*I am useful to humans, but when I am burned, I damage the environment.*



# Technology then and now

1. **Look** at the pictures below.
2. **Discuss:** What do you think these items were used for in the past? Are they still used today?



...was used for... (+ing)  
...was used to... (+ infinitive)



...is (still) used for... (+ing)  
...is (still) used for... (+ing)

# Answer key

**P.9:** given, known, seen, written, made, used, sold, built, grown, spoken

**P.11:**

2. His daughter is driven to school (by him).
3. The speeding car is stopped (by the policeman).
4. A question is asked (by her).
5. The door is opened (by them).
6. The pizza is eaten (by us).

**P.12:** 1.) is 2.) developed 3.) made 4.) are 5.) published 6.) used

**P.15:** The new sofa was delivered yesterday/The patient was treated in hospital

**P.17:** 1.) passive 2.) active 3.) passive 4.) passive 5.) passive

**P.22:**

- 2.) English is spoken in England.
- 3.) *Hamlet* was written by Shakespeare.
- 4.) A hit song was sung (by her).
- 5.) All the food was eaten (by us).
- 6.) The poem was written (by you).



# Summary

## The passive voice:

- **Passive sentences** focus on **what happens** to someone or something.
- The **focus shifts** from the **subject** to the **object** of the sentence.
- It's often used when the person doing the action is either **obvious** or **unimportant**.

## Comparing the active and the passive:

- **Active** sentences always tell us **who** or **what** performs an action. **Passive** sentences do not.
- The **object** of the active sentence is the **subject** of the passive sentence.
- **Active** → *I update my laptop every week.* **Passive** → *My laptop is updated every week.*

## Forming the passive:

- The **present simple** passive is formed from the present tense of **to be** + **the past participle**
- *The questions are answered. The class is taught.*
- The **past simple** passive is formed from the **past simple** of **to be** + **past participle**
- *The questions were answered. The class was taught.*

## Stating the agent in the passive:

- Use **by** to introduce the **agent** in a passive sentence. The agent can be **a person** or **a thing**.
- You can leave out the agent in a passive sentence, but not in an active sentence.
- **Active** → *A fire destroyed the building.* **Passive** → *The building was destroyed [by fire].*





# Vocabulary

started

bought

found

taken

drunk

