

STUDY REFERENCE

GRAMMAR

Working overseas

Language Summary

Passive verb-forms

- You use passive verb-forms to emphasize what happens rather than who makes it happen. In the sentence *I'm treated pretty well*, the fact that the person receives good treatment is more important than who treats him well. In fact, we do not even know who treats him well.
- You use passive verb-forms when you want to put the emphasis on a particular person or thing. In the following sentence, you want to focus attention on *Tracy*, not *Lynn*.

Tracy was met at the airport by Lynn.

In the sentence below, the speaker wants to focus attention on *the flowers*.

The flowers were picked by a friend of mine.

Active or Passive Verb-forms

When you want to emphasize who makes something happen rather than what happens, you use an active verb-form rather than a passive verb-form.

My work colleagues treat me pretty well.

Lynn met Tracy at the airport.

Present Continuous Passive: Subject + am/are/is + being + past participle.

- You use the present continuous passive to emphasize what is happening now or is a temporary or ongoing situation rather than who is making it happen.
I'm being treated pretty well.

Past Continuous Passive: Subject + was/were + being + past participle.

- You use the past continuous passive to emphasize what was happening rather than who was making it happen: *We were being driven to the hotel.*

Present Simple Passive / Past Simple Passive

You use the present simple/past simple passive for a fact.

Trey is always treated pretty well.

Last week Lisa was treated for a sprained ankle.

