

# Active and passive voice

Verbs are said to be either active:

- a) The executive committee <u>approved</u> the new policy.
- b) The House will reject the new bill.

## or passive:

- a) The new policy  $\underline{\text{was approved}}$  by the executive committee.
- b) The new bill will be rejected by the House.

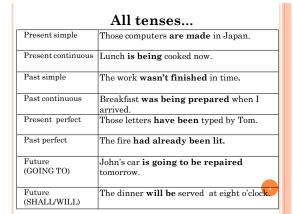


Sometimes a statement in passive is more polite than active voice:

a) Many mistakes were made.

The focus is on the fact that many mistakes were made, but we do not blame anyone.

- b) You have made many mistakes.
- c) The Prime Minister made many mistakes.



# With modals...

must	That card <b>must be posted</b> immediately.
can/could	That homework <b>can be done</b> tomorrow.
should	The police should be notified immediately.
have to	That translation <b>has to be finished</b> by nine o'clock.
may/might	The meeting may be postponed because of the strike.

# Form

Subject + finite form of to be + Past Participle (3rd column of irregular verbs)

How to form a passive sentence when an active sentence is given:

- the object of the "active" sentence becomes the subject in the "passive" sentence and is the main focus  $\,$
- the subject of the "active" sentence is left out or dropped in the "passive", it is not known or it is not the main focus
- a) A letter was written.
- b) The law is approved.
- c) The fax will be sent.



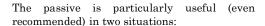
### Passive sentences with by

We are not interested in the "doer" of an action in a passive sentence. When we want to mention the "doer", we use the preposition **by**. The whole phrase is called **by-agent** in English.

- a) The letter was sent by Mary.
- b) The law is approved by the House.
- c) The fax will be sent by the secretary.

When we don't know who was the "doer" of the action, we use someone or somebody in the active sentence. We leave out these words in the passive sentence.

- d) Somebody took my coat by mistake.
- e) My coat was taken by mistake.



When it is more important to draw our attention to the person or thing acted upon:

a) The victim <u>was injured</u> during the early morning hours and <u>she is currently being treated</u> in the emergency room.

When the actor in the situation is not important, or not known:

b) The bank has been robbed twice this month.



# Write passive sentences in Simple Present.

- 1)The documents / print
- 2)The window / open
- 3)The shoes / buy
- 4)The car / wash
- 5)The litter / throw away
- 6)The letter / send
- 7) The book / read / not
- 8)The songs / sing / not
- 9)The food / eat / not
- 10) The shop / close / not

# Write passive sentences in Simple Past.

- 1)The test / write
- 2)The table / set
- 3)The cat / feed
- 4)The lights / switch on
- 5)The house / build
- 6)Dinner / serve
- 7) This computer / sell / not
- 8)The car / stop / not
- 9)The tables / clean / not
- 10) The children / pick up / not

# Write passive sentences in Present Perfect.

- 1)The postcard / send
- 2) The pencils / count
- 3)The door / close
- 4)The beds / make
- 5)The mail / write
- 6)The trees / plant
- 7)The money / spend
- 8)The room / book / not 9)The rent / pay / not
- 10) The people / inform / not

# Write passive sentences in <u>Future</u> (will and be going to)

- 1)The exhibition / visit
- 2)The windows / clean
- 3)The message / read
- 4)The thief / arrest
- 5)The photo / take
- 6)These songs / sing
- 7)The sign / see / not
- 8)A dictionary / use / not
- 9) Credit cards / accept / not
- 10) The ring / find / not

Each of the sentences below is in the PASSIVE VOICE. Write the correct form of each verb in brackets:		
1. Tom was	many times to stop talking in class. (tell)	
2. He was	by the movie. (disappoint)	
3. He was1	by his brother to go to the beach. (convince)	
4. The present was	to her by her co-worker. (give)	
5. The thief was	by the police. (catch)	
6. This book is being	by all the students. (read)	
7. A new shopping mall is go	ing to be in Pasadena. (build)	
8. Many mistakes were	by the students. (make)	
9. The meeting was	in the conference room. (hold)	

# Convert the following sentences into the passive voice.

- 1. Jennifer bought the cake.
- 2. Millions of people visit Cape Town every year.
- 3. Emily and Patrick ate my chocolate!
- 4. Sam painted a beautiful picture.
- 5. Kevin drives Kate to work every day.
- 6. Peter killed the rat.
- 7. Caroline eats two bars of chocolate daily.
- 8. The waves hit the ship.
- 9. Sophie cleans the kitchen.
- 10. Everyone watches the fireworks.



# Make passive sentences.

- 1) This wall / paint / my father / by / was
- 2) Planes / fly / are / pilots / by
- 3) Cricket / play / in / India / is
- 4) you / by / This picture / was / take
- 5) The hospital / open / the Queen / was / by
- 6) Glass / make / is / from / sand
- 7) The book / write / Shakespeare



# Add the missing word in the sentences: been booked by cleaning had not said was

- 1) The bridge was designed an American engineer.
- 2) This seat has already been.
- 3) My car has stolen twice.
- 4) Accommodation is included in the price.
- 5) It officially announced that there will not be a tax increase.
- 6) The door been left unlocked.
- 7) This room needs. It's really dirty!
- 8) It is that the Prime Minister will soon resign.

# You are not allowed to smoke in here. - Smoking \_\_\_\_\_\_ in here. People speak hundreds of languages in India. - Hundreds of languages \_\_\_\_\_\_ in India. Trucks deliver the goods to the warehouse. - The goods \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the warehouse in trucks. Somebody built the house in 1960. - The house \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in 1960. Somebody has stolen my car. - My car \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Nobody invited me to the party. - I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the party. Our manager took the decision. - The decision \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by our manager. We will finish everything tomorrow. - Everything \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tomorrow.

# Make passive sentences.

- 1) St. Paul's Cathedral / destroy / in 1666.
- 2) Many cars / produce / in the U.S.A.
- 3) Millions of Michael Jackson's records / sell / in the 1980s.
- 4) Yesterday / the football match / watch / by thousands.
- 5) Thousands of bombs / drop / on Germany / in World War II.
- 6) Lady Diana / kill / in a car accident / in 1997.

Change the following sentences to the passive voice.
1. You must put out all smoking materials.
2. You must fasten the seat belt.
3. They will demonstrate safety precautions.
4. You should read the safety instructions.
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5. You can store small packages in the overhead compartment.
6. When the seatbelt light goes off, you may remove the
seatbelt.
7.They may serve a meal.
8. They might show a movie.
9. They will serve coffee.
9.1 ney will serve conee.
6. Passengers
5. Five of the committee members will be unable to attend the next meeting. In my opinion, the meeting (postpone).  6. A child (not give) everything he or she wants.  7. Your daughter has a good voice. Her interest in singing (encourage).  8. Try to speak slowly when you give your speech, If you don't, some of your words (misunderstand).

1. She is very lazy. If you want her to do anything, she (force) to do it.
2. The hospital in that small town is very old and can no longer serve the needs of the community. A new hospital (build) years ago.
3. Whales(save) from extinction.
4. We can't wait any longer! Something(do) immediately.
5. In my opinion, she (elect) because she is honest, knowledgeable, and competent.

6. The class for next semester is too large. It (divide) in half, but there's not enough money in the budget to hire another teacher.
7. Polly(return) these books by next Friday.
8. This application (send) to the personnel department soon.
9. A: Ann didn't expect to see her boss at the labor union meeting. B: She (surprise) when she saw him. A: She was.

## Sources:

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