

THE PASSIVE VOICE



When do we use it?

When the agent is unknown

Flats are sold

Anne was given a kiss

When the agent is not important

The house can be visited between 8 and 14.

When we want to give importance to the object of the active voice

America was discovered in 1492 by Columbus

The passive is used more in writing and formal speech, such as public information (rules, signs, brochures ...) and media reports.

Cycling is not permitted in this area.

Bookings can be made online.

HOW TO FORM PASSIVE VOICE

Someone **cleans** **the streets** every day

The streets **are cleaned** every day



VERB CHANGES: TO BE + PAST PARTICIPLE
(same verbal tense of the active sentence)

Columbus **discovered** **America** in 1492

America **was discovered** **by** Columbus in 1492



VERB CHANGES: TO BE + PAST PARTICIPLE
(same verbal tense of the active sentence)

We **have elected** **a new President**

A new President **has been elected** (by us)

They **are playing** **the match** on Saturday

The match **is being played** on Saturday (by them)

- If the object is a pronoun, make sure to change it to a subject pronoun:

me → I him → he her → she them → they us → we

I bought **him** a present.

He was bought a present.

TENSE

ACTIVE

PASSIVE

Present Simple

I **make** a cake

A cake **is** made

Present Contin.

I **'m making** a cake

A cake **is being** made.

Past Simple

I **made** a cake.

A cake **was** made.

Past Continuous

I **was making** a cake.

A cake **was being** made.

Present Perfect

I **have made** a cake

A cake **has been** made.

Past Perfect

I **had made** a cake.

A cake **had been** made.

Future Simple

I **will** make a cake.

A cake **will be** made.

Future be going to

I **'m going to** make a cake.

A cake **is going to be** made.

Modal

I **must** make a cake.

A cake **must be** made.

Modal Perfect

I **should have** made a cake.

A cake **should have been** made.

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- Never use (do, does or did) with the passive voice.

They **didn't** sell all the tickets for the concert.

*All the tickets **weren't** sold.*

We **do not** give lesson on public holidays.

*Lessons **are not** given on public holidays.*

- If there is a preposition with the verb, do not forget it.

Sue looks after the children.



The children are looked after by Sue

OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

- When you also want to mention the person or people that did the action use **by**.

“The new art exhibition was opened **by** the Queen.”

VERBS WITH TWO OBJECTS

bring, give, ask, pay, sell, offer, owe, show, tell, send, lend, leave, promise, take, teach, throw, write

They gave **Susan** a **prize**.


Susan was **given** a prize.

A prize was **given** to Susan.

If the verb has two objects, we usually use the **person** as the subject in the passive.

No one gave **me** any directions.

I wasn't given any directions.

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- ✓ **GET** is used instead of **BE** with *passive meaning*. Informal English.
 - *I got stuck in a traffic jam*
 - *She is getting married*

- ✓ Verbs like: Believe, Think, Consider, Say, Report, Know, Expect, Feel, Understand, Find
 - Active: They say that he started the fire
 - Active: They think that she doesn't live in London
 - Active: We knew that the king is coming tomorrow

Passive with “introductory IT”

- ◆ *It is said that he started the fire*
- ◆ *It is thought that she doesn't live in London*
- ◆ *It was known that the King is coming tomorrow*