

PASSIVE VOICE 3

A

Study this example situation:



George is very old. Nobody knows exactly how old he is, but:

It is said that he is 108 years old.

or **He is said to be** 108 years old.

Both these sentences mean: 'People say that he is 108 years old.'

You can use these structures with a number of other verbs, especially:

alleged believed considered expected known reported thought understood

Compare the two structures:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Cathy loves running.
It is said that she runs ten miles a day. | or She is said to run ten miles a day. |
| ☐ The police are looking for a missing boy.
It is believed that the boy is wearing a white sweater and blue jeans. | or The boy is believed to be wearing a white sweater and blue jeans. |
| ☐ The strike started three weeks ago.
It is expected that the strike will end soon. | or The strike is expected to end soon. |
| ☐ A friend of mine has been arrested.
It is alleged that he hit a policeman. | or He is alleged to have hit a policeman. |
| ☐ The two houses belong to the same family.
It is said that there is a secret tunnel between them. | or There is said to be a secret tunnel between them. |

These structures are often used in news reports. For example, in a report about an accident:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ It is reported that two people were injured in the explosion. | or Two people are reported to have been injured in the explosion. |
|---|--|

B

(Be) supposed to

Sometimes **(it is) supposed to ...** = **(it is) said to ...** :

- ☐ I want to see that film. **It's supposed to be good.** (= it is said to be good)
- ☐ Fireworks **are supposed to have been invented** in China. Is it true?

But sometimes **supposed to** has a different meaning. We use **supposed to** to say what is intended, arranged or expected. Often this is different from the real situation:

- ☐ The plan **is supposed to be** a secret, but everybody seems to know about it.
(= the plan is intended to be a secret)
- ☐ What are you doing at work? You're **supposed to be** on holiday.
(= you arranged to be on holiday)
- ☐ Our guests **were supposed to come** at 7.30, but they were late.
- ☐ Jane **was supposed to phone** me last night, but she didn't.
- ☐ I'd better hurry. I'm **supposed to be meeting** Chris in ten minutes.

You're **not supposed to** do something = it is not allowed or advisable:

- ☐ You're **not supposed to park** your car here. It's private parking only.
- ☐ Jeff is much better after his illness, but he's still **not supposed to do** any heavy work.

Exercises

45.1 Write these sentences in another way, beginning as shown. Use the underlined word each time.

- 1 It is expected that the strike will end soon. The strike is expected to end soon.
- 2 It is expected that the weather will be good tomorrow.
The weather is
- 3 It is believed that the thieves got in through a window in the roof.
The thieves
- 4 It is reported that many people are homeless after the floods.
Many people
- 5 It is thought that the prisoner escaped by climbing over a wall.
The prisoner
- 6 It is alleged that the man was driving at 110 miles an hour.
The man
- 7 It is reported that the building has been badly damaged by the fire.
The building
- 8 a It is said that the company is losing a lot of money.
The company
- b It is believed that the company lost a lot of money last year.
The company
- c It is expected that the company will make a loss this year.
The company

45.2 There are a lot of rumours about Alan. Here are some of the things people say about him:

- 1 Alan speaks ten languages.
 - 2 He knows a lot of famous people.
 - 3 He is very rich.
 - 4 He has twelve children.
 - 5 He was an actor when he was younger.
- 
- Alan

Nobody is sure whether these things are true. Write sentences about Alan using **supposed to**.

- 1 Alan is supposed to speak ten languages.
- 2 He
- 3
- 4
- 5

45.3 Complete the sentences using **supposed to be** + the following:

on a diet a flower my friend a joke -a secret working

- 1 How is it that everybody seems to know about the plan? It is supposed to be a secret.
- 2 You shouldn't criticise me all the time. You
- 3 I shouldn't be eating this cake really. I
- 4 I'm sorry for what I said. I was trying to be funny. It
- 5 What's this drawing? Is it a tree? Or maybe it
- 6 You shouldn't be reading the paper now. You

45.4 Write sentences with **supposed to** + the following verbs:

block depart -park phone start

Use the **negative (not supposed to)** where necessary.

- 1 You 're not supposed to park here. It's private parking only.
- 2 We work at 8.15, but we rarely do anything before 8.30.
- 3 Oh, I Helen last night, but I completely forgot.
- 4 This door is a fire exit. You it.
- 5 My flight at 11.30, but it was an hour late.