

PASSIVE OF REPORTING VERBS

GRAMMAR VI

Your name is _____ I.D.Card number _____

♦ Sometimes when you are reporting what people say or believe, you don't know, or you don't want to say, who exactly the 'people' are. So you use an impersonal construction:

People believe that thousands of birds died.

The same idea can be expressed by using the passive in two different ways:

a) **subject + passive of reporting verb + 'to' infinitive**

Hundreds of thousands of birds are believed to have died.

b) **It + passive of reporting verb + that + clause**

It is believed that hundreds of thousands of birds died.

○ Some other reporting verbs that can be used in this way are:

calculate, claim, consider, discover, estimate, expect, feel, hope, know, prove, report, say, show, think, understand, etc.

○ With present reference, the passive is followed by the present infinitive:

People think that Johnson is in Cardiff.

Johnson is thought to be in Cardiff.

○ With past reference, the passive is followed by the past infinitive:

People believe that Johnson left Cardiff last month.

Johnson is believed to have left Cardiff last month.

○ Present and past continuous infinitives are also used:

They think that the forger is living in Florence. The forger is thought to be living in Florence.

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People know that the suspect has been dealing with drugs. *The suspect is known to have been dealing with drugs.*

- Passive infinitives can also appear:

People believe that the portrait was painted by Vermeer.
The portrait is believed to have been painted by Vermeer.

They think that the staff are given a bonus whenever they have to work overtime. *The staff are thought to be given a bonus whenever they have to work overtime.*

- The reporting verb can also be past:

People considered the government had spent too much.
The government was considered to have paid too much.

Workshop 3

- ◆ Rewrite each sentence so that the meaning stays the same.

- 1 People think that neither side wanted war.
 Neither side is
- 2 People say that fewer than 1,000 blue whales survive in the southern hemisphere.
 Fewer
- 3 Everyone knows that eating fruit is good for you.
 Eating fruit
- 4 People consider that one in three bathing beaches is unfit for swimming.
 One in three bathing beaches
- 5 At least 130,000 dolphins are reported to be caught in the nets of tuna fishers every year.
 It is
- 6 It is estimated that in the past 15 years about 10 million dolphins have been killed.
 About 10 million dolphins