

## 6 The Passive

### 6 Put the verbs in brackets into the correct passive tense.

- 1 A: Are you going to the concert tomorrow?  
B: No, I'm not. It ... *has been cancelled* ...  
(cancel) because of the bad weather.
- 2 A: Did you receive my parcel?  
B: No, it ..... (not/deliver) yet.
- 3 A: Will there be any prizes?  
B: Yes. Medals ..... (give) to the winners.
- 4 A: Can I expect to get to England on time?  
B: Sorry Madam, but all flights .....  
(delay).
- 5 A: Is there anything I can do for you, sir?  
B: Yes, these faxes .....  
(should/send) right away.
- 6 A: Did you hear about the missing girl?  
B: Yes. Luckily, she ..... (find)  
at the train station.
- 7 A: The hotel is in terrible condition.  
B: Yes. It .....  
(should/repair).
- 8 A: Do you have any plans for this evening?  
B: I'm going to an art exhibition which .....  
(hold) at the museum.
- 9 A: Should I leave a tip?  
B: You don't have to. The service .....  
(include) in the bill.
- 10 A: Is your new house ready to move into?  
B: No. The walls .....  
(not/paint) yet.
- 11 A: Did you go to Lisa's party?  
B: No. I .....  
(not/invite).
- 12 A: Have they caught the bank robbers yet?  
B: Unfortunately, no arrests .....  
(make).

#### Changing from active into passive

- The **object** of the active verb becomes the **subject** in the new sentence. The active verb changes into a passive form and the subject of the active verb becomes the agent. The agent (= person who does the action) is introduced with 'by' or is omitted.

	Subject	Verb	Object	Agent
active	Bell	invented	the telephone.	
passive	The telephone	was invented		by Bell.

- We use **by + agent** to say who or what did the action. We use **with + instrument, material or ingredient** to say what instrument or material the agent used.

*A kite was made by Tim.* (Tim did the action.)

*Mr Smith was hit by Billy with a ball.* (The ball is the instrument the agent used.)

*The cake was made with flour, sugar and eggs.* (Flour, sugar and eggs are the ingredients the agent used.)

- We put the agent (= person who performs the action) into the passive when it is a specific or an important person or when it is essential to the meaning of the sentence. When the agent is unknown, unimportant or obvious from the context, it is omitted. Agents such as **someone, people, I, you, etc.** are omitted.

*Macbeth was written by Shakespeare.* (The agent is not omitted; it is essential to the meaning of the sentence.)

*Somebody took my pen.* → *My pen was taken (by somebody).* (unknown agent; it is omitted.)

- After modal verbs (**will, can, may, etc.**) we use **be + past participle** or **have been + past participle**.

*They may close down the theatre.* → *The theatre may be closed down.*

*They may have reported the bank robbery.* → *The bank robbery may have been reported.*

- With verbs that take two objects it is more usual to begin the passive sentence with the person.

*They sent a letter to him.* → *He was sent a letter.* (more usual) / *A letter was sent to him.* (less usual)

- **Make, hear, see, help**, are followed by a **to infinitive** in the passive.  
They **made me apologise**. → **I was made to apologise**.
- When we want to find out who or what did something, then the passive question form is as follows: **Who / What ... by?** **Who was penicillin discovered by?** **What was the fire caused by?**
- The verbs **believe, expect, feel, hope, know, report, say, think, etc.** can be used in the following passive patterns:
  - a) **It + passive + that-clause** (impersonal construction)
  - b) **subject (person) + passive + to infinitive** (personal construction)

People say she is rich.  
**It is said that she is rich.**  
**She is said to be rich.**

### 7 Write the sentences in the passive.

- 1 An expert is restoring the antique car. **The antique car is being restored by an expert.**
- 2 Steven Spielberg has directed a lot of successful films. ....
- 3 They saw two men running out of the bank. ....
- 4 A number of reporters will meet the professor at the airport. ....
- 5 A famous designer is going to redecorate the President's house. ....
- 6 The Romans founded Bath in the first century AD. ....
- 7 A loud noise woke Mary up. ....
- 8 He made her work overtime. ....
- 9 Van Gogh painted *Sunflowers*. ....
- 10 Astronauts are exploring space. ....

### 8 Write the sentences in the passive. Omit the agent where it can be omitted.

- 1 People chop down a lot of trees every year. **A lot of trees are chopped down every year. (omitted)**
- 2 Homer wrote the *Iliad*. ....
- 3 The government will introduce new measures against crime. ....
- 4 Someone has burgled Ann's house. ....
- 5 She offered me a cup of tea. ....
- 6 They check passports at Passport Control. ....
- 7 A million people visit the cathedral every year. ....
- 8 Someone has stolen Mike's bicycle. ....
- 9 The mayor will open the exhibition. ....
- 10 Somebody saw Roger leave. ....

### 9 Fill in *by* or *with*.

1 This salad is made <b>with</b> tomatoes and onions.	5 The picture was painted ..... Jackson Pollock.
2 That novel was written ..... D. H. Lawrence.	6 The house was built ..... stone and bricks.
3 The garden was dug ..... a spade.	
4 The pudding was made ..... chocolate.	