



Grammar 2

The passive: impersonal and personal structures

1 Read about impersonal and personal structures.

We often use verbs like *believe, consider, know, expect, say, report, suppose* and *think* in the passive voice. They can be used in an impersonal or a personal passive structure.

We form the impersonal passive structure with *it + passive verb + that + clause*.
Many people believe that magazines should be cheaper. (active voice)
It is believed that magazines should be cheaper. (passive voice)

We form the personal passive structure with noun + passive verb + full infinitive.
Many people say that teenagers spend too much time surfing the Net. (active voice)
Teenagers are said to spend too much time surfing the Net. (passive voice)

2 Read the sentences and underline the passive verbs they contain. Which sentence uses an impersonal passive structure?

- a *It is known that advertisements sell products.*
- b *Advertisements are known to sell products.*

Read 7.2 of the Grammar Reference before you do the tasks.

3 Read the sentences and write I (for impersonal passive structure) or P (for personal structure).

- 1 *He is considered to be one of the best journalists in the world.* _____
- 2 *It is believed that this play was written by Shakespeare.* _____
- 3 *The magazine is known to be informative and colourful.* _____
- 4 *It is reported that there has been a decrease in the sale of newspapers.* _____
- 5 *The columnist is supposed to be knowledgeable about fashion.* _____
- 6 *Teenagers are believed to be the most frequent users of the Net.* _____
- 7 *The robber is said to be on the run from the police.* _____
- 8 *It is expected that this video will go viral.* _____

4 Complete the sentences using impersonal and personal passive structures.

- 1 *People know that he stars on the big screen.*
a *It _____ he stars on the big screen.*
b *He _____ on the big screen.*
- 2 *People suppose that e-books are more environmentally friendly than printed books.*
a *It _____ e-books are more environmentally friendly than printed books.*
b *E-books _____ more environmentally friendly than printed books.*
- 3 *People say that the newspaper story is untrue.*
a *It _____ the newspaper story is untrue.*
b *The newspaper story _____ untrue.*
- 4 *People think that she is making a name for herself by being unusual.*
a *It _____ she is making a name for herself by being unusual.*
b *She _____ making a name for herself by being unusual.*
- 5 *People believe that attitudes towards the media are changing.*
a *It _____ attitudes towards the media are changing.*
b *Attitudes towards the media _____ changing.*
- 6 *People consider horoscopes to be fun and entertaining.*
a *It _____ horoscopes are fun and entertaining.*
b *Horoscopes _____ fun and entertaining.*
- 7 *People expect the film to win an award.*
a *It _____ the film will win an award.*
b *The film _____ an award.*
- 8 *People report that the newspaper is closing.*
a *It _____ the newspaper is closing.*
b *The newspaper _____ closing.*

