

The Passive: 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 when in an impersonal or a personal passive structure.

We form the **impersonal passive** structure with **it + passive verb + that + clause**

◊ Active voice = *Many people believe that magazines should be cheaper*

● Passive voice = **It is believed that** magazines should be cheaper.



We form the **personal passive** structure with **noun + passive verb + full infinitive**

◊ Active voice = *Many people say that teenagers spend too much time surfing the Net.*

● Passive voice = **Teenagers are said to spend** too much time surfing the Net.



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.

