

Passive voice - Impersonal report structures

Special Passive Structures such as ***It is believed that.../ It is agreed to... He is said to.../She is thought to...*** are used **when we cannot say or do not need to say who the source of information was.**

This type of sentence structure is formal and is mainly used in written English.

❖ There are some verbs that can have **two constructions** in Passive Voice:

1) **Impersonal construction** and 2) **Personal construction.**

❖ These verbs are:

Accept/ admit/ agree/ allege/ announce/ assure/ assume/ believe/ claim/ consider/ comment/ decide/ declare/ discover/ estimate/ expect/ explain/find/ know/ mention/ predict/ suggest/ realize/ report/ say/ recommend/ show/state/ suppose/ suggest/think/ understand

1) Impersonal Construction: (no person – with it)

It + verb in passive (present or past) + that + clause

Examples:

- ✓ People **say** that she is a millionaire. ⇒ **It is said** that she is a millionaire.
- ✓ People **believe** that the President will resign. ⇒ **It is believed** that the President will resign.
- ✓ They **don't believe** his health is terrible. ⇒ **It is not believed** that his health is very terrible.
- ✓ They **thought** he was responsible. ⇒ **It was thought** that he was responsible.

2) Personal Construction: (person / subject)

Subject + verb in passive (present or past) + full infinitive form

Examples:

- ✎ They **believe** his health **is** terrible. ⇒ His health **is believed to be** terrible.
- ✎ They **say** that she **isn't** a millionaire. ⇒ She **isn't said to be** a millionaire.
- ✎ People **say** that Dr Lewis **is** a good doctor. ⇒ Dr Lewis **is said to be** a good doctor.
- ✎ Someone **reported** that the actor **suffered** an overdose. ⇒ The actor **was reported to suffer** an overdose.

Note: With these structures the agent of the action is NEVER mentioned (who believes/ who reports/ who knows/ ...)

It + passive verb + that –clause
Subject + passive verb + to-infinitive

People **rumour** that Angelina Jolie has anorexia
It is rumoured that Angelina Jolie has anorexia.
Angelina Jolie **is rumoured** to have anorexia

The tense of the passive verb is determined by the active sentence:

rumour = present simple → **is rumoured**

Passive Gerund = being + past participle

I don't appreciate people lying to me.

I don't appreciate **being lied to.**

Passive Infinitive = to + be + past part

Someone saw him leave the building

He was seen **to leave the building.**

Change to impersonal passive

1. They say the PM is dying.

It _____

The _____

2. They expect the concert will finish at about 11pm.

It _____

The _____

3. People said she had been driving drunk.

It _____

She _____

4. They thought she lied to the police

It _____

She _____

5. People know he committed the murder.

It _____

He _____

6. They think rebels have kidnapped him.

It _____

He _____

7. People claim she is a secret agent.

It _____

She _____

Change to Gerund or Infinitive Passive

1. Someone heard her singing.

She _____

2. Daniela hates people telling her what to do.

She _____

3. Marge loves people to give her compliments.

She _____

4. Roger can't stand people pushing him in queues.

He _____

5. The boss wants us to inform him about all the latest developments.

He _____

6. James isn't keen on anyone taking his things without asking.

He _____

7. I resent everyone blaming me for the accident.

I _____

8. Cynthia loves people to give her flowers.

Cynthia _____

9. Someone saw him run away.

He _____
