

PASSIVE VOICE 2

I was offered ... / we were given ... etc.

Some verbs can have two objects. For example, **give**:

- Somebody gave the police the information. (= somebody gave the information to the police)
- object 1 object 2

So it is possible to make two passive sentences:

- ☐ The police were given the information. *or*
The information was given to the police.

Other verbs which can have two objects are:

ask offer pay show teach tell

When we use these verbs in the passive, most often we begin with the *person*:

- ☐ I've **been offered** the job, but I don't think I'll accept it. (= they have offered me the job)
- ☐ You **will be given** plenty of time to decide. (= we will give you plenty of time)
- ☐ I didn't see the original document but I **was shown** a copy. (= somebody showed me.)
- ☐ Tim has an easy job – **he's paid** a lot of money to do very little. (= they pay him a lot)

I don't like being ...

The passive of **doing/seeing** etc. is **being done / being seen** etc. Compare:

active I don't like **people telling me** what to do.

passive I don't like **being told** what to do.

- ☐ I remember **being taken** to the zoo when I was a child.
(= I remember somebody taking me to the zoo)
- ☐ Steve hates **being kept** waiting. (= he hates people keeping him waiting)
- ☐ We managed to climb over the wall without **being seen**. (= without anybody seeing us)

I was born ...

We say 'I **was** born ...' (*not* I am born):

- ☐ I **was born** in Chicago.
- ☐ Where **were** you **born**? (not Where are you born?) } *past*

but

- ☐ How many babies **are born** every day? *present*

Get

You can use **get** instead of **be** in the passive:

- ☐ There was a fight at the party, but nobody **got hurt**. (= nobody **was hurt**)
- ☐ I don't **get invited** to many parties. (= I'm not invited)
- ☐ I'm surprised Liz **didn't get offered** the job. (= Liz **wasn't offered** the job)

We use **get** only when things *happen*. For example, you cannot use **get** in these sentences:

- ☐ Jessica **is liked** by everybody. (*not gets liked* – this is not a ‘happening’)
- ☐ Peter was a mystery man. Very little **was known** about him. (*not got known*)

We use **get** mainly in informal spoken English. You can use **be** in all situations.

We also use **get** in the following expressions (which are not passive in meaning):

get married, get divorced

get lost (= not know where you are)

get dressed (= put on your clothes)

get changed (= change your clothes)

Exercises

44.1 Write these sentences in another way, beginning in the way shown.

- 1 They didn't give me the information I needed.
I wasn't given the information I needed.
- 2 They asked me some difficult questions at the interview.
I _____
- 3 Amy's colleagues gave her a present when she retired.
Amy _____
- 4 Nobody told me about the meeting.
I wasn't _____
- 5 How much will they pay you for your work?
How much will you _____
- 6 I think they should have offered Tom the job.
I think Tom _____
- 7 Has anybody shown you what to do?
Have you _____

44.2 Complete the sentences using **being** + the following verbs (in the correct form):

give invite ~~keep~~ knock down stick treat

- 1 Steve hates being kept waiting.
- 2 We went to the party without _____.
- 3 I like giving presents and I also like _____ them.
- 4 It's a busy road and I don't like crossing it. I'm afraid of _____.
- 5 I'm an adult. I don't like _____ like a child.
- 6 You can't do anything about _____ in a traffic jam.

44.3 When were they born? Choose five of these people and write a sentence for each.

(Two of them were born in the same year.)

Ludwig van Beethoven	Mahatma Gandhi	Elvis Presley	1452	1869	1935
Walt Disney	Michael Jackson	William Shakespeare	1564	1901	1958
Galileo	Martin Luther King	Leonardo da Vinci	1770	1929	

- 1 Walt Disney was born in 1901.
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____
- 7 And you? I _____

44.4 Complete the sentences using **get/got** + the following verbs (in the correct form):

ask damage ~~hurt~~ pay steal sting stop use

- 1 There was a fight at the party, but nobody got hurt.
- 2 Alex _____ by a bee while he was sitting in the garden.
- 3 These tennis courts don't _____ very often. Not many people want to play.
- 4 I used to have a bicycle, but it _____ a few months ago.
- 5 Rachel works hard but doesn't _____ very much.
- 6 Last night I _____ by the police as I was driving home. One of the lights on my car wasn't working.
- 7 Please pack these things very carefully. I don't want them to _____.
- 8 People often want to know what my job is. I _____ that question a lot.

