

PASSIVE OF REPORTING VERBS / IMPERSONAL PASSIVE

Verbs that refer to saying or thinking (**think, believe, say, report, know, consider, presume, hope...**) are often followed by a to-infinitive form in the passive.

Example: The police **think** he **is** in Argentina.
He **is thought to be** in Argentina.

There are **FOUR INFINITIVE FORMS**, which we will use depending on the tense we have in the active sentence.

Simple	to write	escribir
Continuous	to be writing	estar escribiendo
Perfect	to have written	haber escrito
Perf. Continuous	to have been writing	haber estado escribiendo

IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS TYPE OF PASSIVE SENTENCE, WE

- 1 Take the subject of the second sentence: **He**
- 2 Passive verb of the Reporting verb in the same tense as in the active: **is thought**
- 3 The verb of the second sentence in the Infinitive form: **to be**

WHICH FORM OF THE INFINITIVE DO WE USE?

- If it carries an **idea of present or future** → Simple: **to write**
- If it carries an **idea of past**, whatever the tense (Past Simple, Past Perfect, Present Perfect) → Perfect: **to have written**.
- If either of them are in a **continuous form**, you use the adequate Infinitive continuous form → **to be writing** or **to have been writing**

SOME MORE EXAMPLES:

ACTIVE	PASSIVE
They <i>say</i> she works hard.	She <i>is said</i> to work hard.
They <i>say</i> she played well.	She <i>is said</i> to have played well.
They <i>said</i> she has done well.	She <i>was said</i> to have done well.
They <i>believe</i> he is having an affair.	He <i>is believed</i> to be having an affair.
They <i>believe</i> he has been having an affair.	He <i>is believed</i> to have been having an affair.
She <i>believes</i> the repairs have been finished .	The repairs <i>are believed</i> to have been finished .

GET / HAVE SOMETHING DONE (Passive Voice)

This construction is passive in meaning. It may describe situations where we want someone else to do something for us.

Examples

- I must **get / have my hair cut**.
- When are you going to **get that window mended**?
- We're **having the house painted**.

If the verb refers to something negative or unwanted, it has the same meaning as a passive sentence:

- Jim **had his car stolen** last night. (= Jim's car was stolen)
- They **had their roof blown off** in the storm. (= Their roof was blown off in the storm)

The construction can refer to the completion of an activity, especially if a time expression is used:

- We'll **get the work done** as soon as possible.
- I'll **get those letters typed** before lunchtime.

In all these sentences, we are more interested in the **result** of the activity than in the person or object that performs the activity.

'X' NEEDS DOING

In the same way, this construction has a passive meaning. The important thing in our minds is the person or thing that will experience the action, e.g.

- The ceiling **needs painting** (= the ceiling needs to be painted)
- My hair **needs cutting** (= my hair needs to be cut)

SOME VERBS HAVE SPECIAL PASSIVE FORMS:

- **MAKE AND HELP**

They are followed by a bare infinitive in the active, but take a **to-infinitive** in the passive

Active: Her two sisters made him **clean** the house
 Passive: He was made **to clean** the house by her two sisters.

- **LET**

In the passive, **let** is replaced by **allowed** and is followed by a to-infinitive.

Active: The teacher **let** us leave early
 Passive: We were **allowed to** leave early (by the teacher)

- **SEE AND HEAR**

Some **verbs of the senses** can be followed by either a **to-infinitive** or a **gerund** form in the passive.

Active: They heard the baby **cry / crying**.
 Passive: The baby was heard **to cry / crying**.

EXERCISES

IMPERSONAL PASSIVE

1. People *believe* that English **is** the most widely spoken language
 - *It is believed* that English **is** the most widely spoken language.
 - English *is believed to be* the most widely spoken language.

2. Police *have reported* that it was Peter who **caused** the accident.
 - *It has been reported* that it was Peter who **caused** the accident.
 - *Peter has been reported to have caused* the accident.

3. A journalist *reports* that they **are leaving** Las Vegas tomorrow night.
 - It _____
 - They _____

4. The lecturer *thought* that Columbus never **realized** that he had discovered America.
 - It _____
 - Columbus _____

5. Their parents *thought* that the teenagers **were dancing** at the disco.
 - It _____
 - The teenagers _____

6. Everybody *thinks* that she **sings** beautifully
 - _____
 - _____

7. The children *reported* that their friends **were swimming** when they disappeared.
 - _____
 - _____

8. People *believed* that they **had killed** the animals during the night.
 - _____
 - _____

9. My friends think that my parents are the best parents in the world.
 - _____
 - _____

10. They believed that the horse was a present.
 - _____
 - _____

11. People are thinking that drugs are very dangerous.
 - _____
 - _____

12. They knew that Mr. Brown was stealing iron from the factory.
 - _____
 - _____

13. Ancient people thought that the stars would fall on them.
 - _____
 - _____

14. People consider that the team will be classified for the final.
 - _____
 - _____

15. Everybody says that he settled the business.
 - _____
 - _____

16. The reporters believed that the meeting would finish soon.
 - _____
 - _____

17. They have thought the sportsmen are arriving today.

- _____
- _____

18. Citizens presume that the government is responsible for the accident.

- _____
- _____

19. The newspapers are reporting that the most outstanding athletes represent their country.

- _____
- _____

20. The shareholders thought that the group had rejected the offer.

- _____
- _____

21. They say that the meeting will be held here

- _____
- _____

22. The hooligans expected that their team would win

- _____
- _____

MIXED TYPES

1. The students all know that Shakespeare was born in Stratford.
- 1 We saw the baby crawl towards the window.
- 2 My parents used to let me go out at night.
- 3 In the Middle Ages, people thought the devil sometimes got into their bodies
- 4 The teacher helped his students finish the exercise.
- 5 Reporters at the airport are expecting that the president will be arriving soon.
- 6 My mother always made me do the housework.
- 7 Football fans have thought that their team is arriving today.
- 8 Everybody knew that Peter had copied at his access exam.
- 9 Doctors consider that lung cancer will have a cure in the next fifty years.
- 10 The police always thought that he had escaped and that he was living in Sweden.
- 11 We could usually hear an opera singer singing upstairs.
- 12 The headmaster made them sit down and stay there until 5 o'clock.
- 13 The usher didn't let us go into the theatre.
- 14 People in the town believed that the heavy rainfall was the reason for the bursting of the dam.