

# The passive

## 66 The passive

- In an active sentence, the subject of the sentence is the 'doer' who performs the action of the verb. In a passive sentence, the object of the active verb becomes the subject. We use the passive only with verbs that take an object. Compare:

|         | Subject   | Action            | Object     |
|---------|-----------|-------------------|------------|
| Active  | He        | has painted       | the house. |
| Passive | The house | has been painted. |            |

- We use the passive when:
  - we want to focus on the action, not the doer of the action: *The house **has been painted**. It looks great!*
  - the doer is not known or not important: *Oh no! My bag's **been stolen!*** (= I don't know who stole it.) *This house **was built** in 1970.* (= Somebody built it. It's not important who.)
  - the doer is obvious or 'people in general': *He **was arrested**.* (Obviously, the police arrested him.) *The show **is watched** all over the world.*
- If we want to mention the doer of the action, we use *by* + agent (= the person/thing that does the action): *I was hit **by a car**.*
- The passive is more common in writing than speech.
- We form the passive with an appropriate form of *be* + past participle.

### PRACTICE

#### 66a Circle the correct answer.

- 0 Very little *knows* / *(is known)* about this disease because it is very rare.
- 1 The government *has spent* / *has been spent* a huge amount of money on education.
- 2 Traffic on the M11 is very slow this week as repairs *are carrying out* / *are being carried out* on two lanes.
- 3 The shopkeeper chased the thieves for a few minutes, but then they *disappeared* / *were disappeared* into the crowd.
- 4 'I've done a lot of work for them, but they *haven't paid* / *haven't been paid* me,' an electrician complained.
- 5 The shopping centre *is going to knock down* / *is going to be knocked down*.
- 6 'We should *inform* / *be informed* about the dangers to our health,' a factory worker said.
- 7 Representatives from sixty-five countries *will attend* / *will be attended* the conference.
- 8 The missing boy *has not found* / *has not been found* yet.

**66b** Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first, using the word in bold. Use between two and five words.

- 0 They have planted a lot of trees along the river. **been**  
A lot of trees ..... *have been planted* ..... along the river.
- 1 Andrew Black wrote this article. **by**  
This article ..... Andrew Black.
- 2 They sell these computer games all over the world. **are**  
These computer games ..... all over the world.
- 3 They're planning a music festival for next summer. **planned**  
A music festival ..... for next summer.
- 4 I'm sure somebody will sort everything out soon. **sorted**  
I'm sure everything ..... soon.
- 5 We can arrange a meeting for next week. **arranged**  
A meeting ..... for next week.
- 6 Caitlin didn't take this photo. **by**  
This photo ..... Caitlin.
- 7 He was unhappy because the coach had not chosen him for the team. **been**  
He was unhappy because he ..... for the team.
- 8 Are we doing enough about climate change? **done**  
Is ..... about climate change?

**66c** Circle the correct answer.

### Stolen Goya painting recovered

A painting by Francisco Goya that (0) ..... stolen while it was (1) ..... to an exhibition in New York earlier this month has (2) ..... *Children with a Cart* (1778) (3) ..... at about \$1.1m.

Apparently, the FBI were called on

Saturday (4) ..... a lawyer who offered to reveal where the painting was.

It is unlikely that the painting will now (5) ..... in the show in New York. It will instead (6) ..... back to its home in Ohio.

- |   |             |  |                     |                    |
|---|-------------|--|---------------------|--------------------|
| 0 | A is        | <input checked="" type="radio"/> B was | C had               | D been             |
| 1 | A transport | B transporting                         | C being transported | D been transported |
| 2 | A recovered | B be recovered                         | C was recovered     | D been recovered   |
| 3 | A is valued | B has valued                           | C been valued       | D valued           |
| 4 | A from      | B for                                  | C by                | D of               |
| 5 | A include   | B be included                          | C have included     | D been included    |
| 6 | A take      | B taking                               | C taken             | D be taken         |