



Grammar 2

The passive: impersonal and personal structures

1 Read about 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 in an impersonal or a personal passive structure.

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

Many people believe that magazines should be cheaper. (active voice)

It is believed that magazines should be cheaper. (passive voice)

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

Many people say that teenagers spend too much time surfing the Net. (active voice)

Teenagers are said to spend too much time surfing the Net. (passive voice)

2 Read the sentences and underline the passive verbs they contain. Which sentence uses an impersonal passive structure?

a It is known that advertisements sell products.

b Advertisements are known to sell products.

Read 7.2 of the Grammar Reference before you do the tasks.

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.

