PASSIVE OF REPORTING VERBS

♦ **Sometimes when you are reporting what people say or believe, you don´t know, or you don´t want to say, who exactly the `people´ are. So you use an impersonal construction:**

People believe that thousands of birds died.

The same idea can be expressed by using the passive in two different ways:

a) **subject + passive of reporting verb + `to´ infinitive**
Hundreds of thousands of birds are believed to have died.

b) **It + passive of reporting verb + that + clause**
It is believed that hundreds of thousands of birds died.

○ Some other reporting verbs that can be used in this way are:

calculate, claim, consider, discover, estimate, expect, feel, hope, know, prove, report, say, show, think, understand, etc.

○ With present reference, the passive is followed by the present infinitive:

People think that Johnson is in Cardiff.
Johnson is thought to be in Cardiff.

○ With past reference, the passive is followed by the past infinitive:

People believe that Johnson left Cardiff last month.
Johnson is believed to have left Cardiff last month.

○ Present and past continuous infinitives are also used:

They think that the forger is living in Florence.
The forger is thought to be living in Florence.

People know that the suspect has been dealing with drugs.
The suspect is known to have been dealing with drugs.

○ Passive infinitives can also appear:

People believe that the portrait was painted by Vermeer.
The portrait is believed to have been painted by Vermeer.

They think that the staff are given a bonus whenever they have to work overtime.
The staff are thought to be given a bonus whenever they have to work overtime.

○ The reporting verb can also be past:

People considered the government had spent too much.
The government was considered to have paid too much.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

♦ **Rewrite each sentence so that the meaning stays the same.**

1 People think that neither side wanted war.
Neither side is .....

2 People say that fewer than 1,000 blue whales survive in the southern hemisphere.
Fewer .....

3 Everyone knows that eating fruit is good for you.
Eating fruit .....

4 People consider that one in three bathing beaches is unfit for swimming.
One in three bathing beaches .....

5 At least 130,000 dolphins are reported to be caught in the nets of tuna fishers every year.
It is .....

6 It is estimated that in the past 15 years about 10 million dolphins have been killed.
About 10 million dolphins .....

7 In ancient Greece people thought dolphins were men who had abandoned life on land.
In ancient Greece it .....

8 In ancient Rome it was believed that dolphins carried souls to heaven.
In ancient Rome dolphins .....

9 People say that the company invested fifty million pounds last week.
The company .....

10 People say Mr Clark was difficult to work with when he was younger.
Mr Clark .....

11 Someone has calculated that the water of the River Rhine contains over 2,000 chemicals.
It .....

12 Everyone thought the painting had been destroyed in the fire.
The painting .....

13 It is believed that the Chinese invented gunpowder.
The Chinese .....

14 About 1 million papers are thought to have been sold.
People .....

15 It is thought that the two injured men were repairing high-tension cable.
The two .....

16 We hope that the government has prepared a plan.
The government .....

17 People say that Mr Bond was having business difficulties when he was charged with fraud.
Mr Bond .....

18 It is thought that this treasure dates from the 19th century.
This treasure .....

19 People believe that a professional thief stole the painting.
It .....

LIVEWORKSHEETS