

PASSIVE VOICE

Read the article below and note what the following numbers refer to.

- 33
- 1,500,000
- 4
- 24
- 10,318
- 1937
- 525
- 3

Filmmaking has changed a lot in the last 100 years - or has it...?

They're slow. They're boring. They don't have any special effects. That's the opinion many people have about old movies. But some film directors continue to use film-making techniques that have not changed for nearly a hundred years, and the results can be charming and fun.

The *Pirates! In an Adventure with scientists!*, created by British company Aardman Animations, is one example. It took five years to make this extremely ambitious film, using the 'stop-frame' filming technique. For every second of finished film, the puppets and models in each scene were moved up to 24 times. On average, it took a whole day to make just four seconds of screen action. A total of 525 people - including 33 animators — worked on the production. This kind of film-making requires great attention to detail. For example, pins were used to make tiny changes to the models. In total, 10,318 puppet mouths were used during filming to create realistic face movements.

However, nearly a hundred years ago, Walt Disney was doing something very similar. Back in 1937, his team made the first ever full-length animated feature film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. He also used the stop-frame technique. In this case, each frame was drawn by hand. More than 1,500,000 frames were used in total. The film took three years to make and cost six times more to make than Disney had planned.

Snow White was hugely successful, and it is still loved today by children around the world. There is no doubt that Aardman Animations' films will be enjoyed in the same way for many years to come. Films that use modern technology may be dramatic and exciting, but hand-made films will always be more impressive and fun to watch.

Passive voice rules

We use **be + a past participle** to make a passive verb form. Are the underlined verbs active (A) or passive (P)?

1. They don't have any special effects.
2. It took five years to make this extremely ambitious film.
3. Here, a pin is being used to move the puppet's eyes.
4. Thousands of frames were drawn by hand.
5. The film cost six times more to make than Disney had planned.
6. Snow White is still loved today by children.
7. Aardman Animations' films will be enjoyed in the same way for many years to come.

Listen to passive sentences in record 3.22 below and notice if the auxiliary verb be is stressed.

Record 3.22

We use passive voice:

- When we care about the object of the action more than about who does the action (A film will be made from the book)
- When the doer/the agent isn't important, is obvious or unknown (The school is being renovated. Our car was stolen last night)

Passive voice is typical for research papers and scientific articles. Please don't over-do with it.

PASSIVE VOICE – ALL TENSES

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ACTIVE

PASSIVE

They **take** the photos **PRESENT SIMPLE** The photos **are** **taken**

They **are taking** the photos **PRESENT CONTINUOUS** The photos **are being** **taken**

They **have taken** the photos **PRESENT PERFECT** The photos **have been** **taken**

They **took** the photos **PAST SIMPLE** The photos **were** **taken**

They **were taking** the photos **PAST CONTINUOUS** The photos **were being** **taken**

They **had taken** the photos **PAST PERFECT** The photos **had been** **taken**

They **will take** the photos **FUTURE** The photos **will be** **taken**

They **are going to take** the photos **BE GOING TO** The photos **are going to be** **taken**

I EAT



to take

INFINITIVE

to be **taken**

**I AM
EATEN**



taking

GERUND

being **taken**

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BY and WITH in passive

We use **BY** to introduce the **person or thing** that does the action:

*This frame was drawn **by** one of the animators.*

We use **WITH** to introduce a **tool, instrument or technique** that was used by the doer.

*The pirate's beard was controlled **with** a wire.*

There are certain verbs that cannot be used in passive voice. These are verbs that don't have an object.

I live in a big house.

(This sentence cannot be transformed into passive voice because the verb 'live' doesn't have an object.)

Complete the passive sentences. Don't include the agents that are in brackets.

1. James Cameron directed Avatar.
Avatar _____.
2. (People) still make these shoes by hand.
These shoes _____.
3. (They) will build a new bridge next year.
A new _____.
4. My grandfather gave me this watch.
I _____.
5. (We)'ve told everybody to be here on time.
Everybody _____.
6. (People) will laugh at you if you wear that hat.
You _____.
7. A computer program creates the special effects.
The special effects _____.
8. My parents are looking after our dog this week.
Our dog _____.
9. (They) offered me £1,000 for my painting.
I _____.
10. (Somebody) was repairing my car at the time.
My car _____.

Rewrite the sentences as either Yes/No questions (?) or negatives (-).

1. We were picked up at the airport.
(-) _____ We weren't picked up at the airport _____.
2. The painting's already been sold.
(?) _____ Has the painting already been sold _____ ?
3. The work will be finished by Saturday.
(-) _____.
4. The film's being made in Brazil.
(?) _____ ?

5. Tomatoes are grown in Spain.

(?) _____?

6. The car was being driven too fast.

(-) _____.

7. The costumes were made by hand.

(?) _____?

8. The sculpture has been taken to the piazza.

(-) _____.