

PASSIVE OF REPORTING VERBS

GRAMMAR VI

Your name is \_\_\_\_\_ I.D.Card number \_\_\_\_\_

◆ 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.*

**PASSIVE OF REPORTING VERBS**

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.*

### **Workshop 3**

- ◆ 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 .....