

# The Passive

6



Listen and repeat. Then act out.



The **passive** is formed by using the appropriate tense of the verb **to be** + **past participle**.

	Active Voice	Passive Voice
Present Simple	They <b>repair</b> cars.	Cars <b>are repaired</b> .
Present Continuous	They <b>are repairing</b> the car.	The car <b>is being repaired</b> .
Past Simple	They <b>repaired</b> the car.	The car <b>was repaired</b> .
Past Continuous	They <b>were repairing</b> the car.	The car <b>was being repaired</b> .
Future Simple	They <b>will repair</b> the car.	The car <b>will be repaired</b> .
Present Perfect	They <b>have repaired</b> the car.	The car <b>has been repaired</b> .
Past Perfect	They <b>had repaired</b> the car.	The car <b>had been repaired</b> .
Future Perfect	They <b>will have repaired</b> the car.	The car <b>will have been repaired</b> .
Present Infinitive	They will have <b>to repair</b> the car.	The car will have <b>to be repaired</b> .
Perfect Infinitive	She ought <b>to have repaired</b> the car.	The car ought <b>to have been repaired</b> .
-ing form	He likes people <b>admiring</b> his new car.	He likes his new car <b>being admired</b> .
Perfect -ing form	<b>Having repaired</b> the car, ...	The car, <b>having been repaired</b> , ...
Modals	You <b>must repair</b> this car.	This car <b>must be repaired</b> .

The **passive** is used:

- when the agent (the person who does the action) is unknown, unimportant or obvious from the context.  
My car **was stolen** yesterday. (unknown agent)  
The road repairs **were completed** last week. (unimportant agent)  
The kidnappers **have been arrested**. (by the police – obvious agent)
- to make statements more polite or formal.  
My new suit **has been burnt**. (It's more polite than saying "You've burnt my new suit.")
- when the action is more important than the agent – as in news reports, formal notices, instructions, processes, headlines, advertisements, etc.  
Taking pictures **is not allowed**. (written notice)  
The local bank **was robbed** this morning. (news report)  
Bread **is baked** in an oven for about 45 minutes. (process)
- to put emphasis on the agent.  
The Tower of London was built by **William the Conqueror**.



## 6

## The Passive

1 Fill in: *is / are, was / were, have / has been*.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Sally told me her wedding dress ..... <i>was</i> ..... designed by Vera Wang.                 | 5 Coffee ..... grown in Brazil.  |
| 2 Before the clothes shop closed, eighty people ..... employed there.                           | 6 Documentaries on marine life ..... shown on TV for many years.         |
| 3 On the first day of our holiday, we ..... taken on a wonderful tour of the city by our guide. | 7 <i>Hamlet</i> and <i>Macbeth</i> ..... written by William Shakespeare. |
| 4 Jeans ..... worn by both men and women nowadays.  | 8 The injured man ..... taken to hospital half an hour ago.              |
|   | 9 Jenny is excited because she ..... offered a new job.                  |

**Note:** We can use the verb **to get** instead of the verb **to be** in everyday speech when we talk about things that happen by accident or unexpectedly.

*Sam got hit by a cyclist as he was crossing the road.*

2 Complete the sentences using *get* and the following verbs in the correct form.

*sting*      *damage*      *steal*      *hurt*      *invite*      *hit*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Olga .. <i>got stung</i> .. by a bee while she was sitting in the garden. | 4 Mary is very popular. She often ..... to parties.                     |
| 2 As he was walking through the park, Tom ..... by a baseball.              | 5 There was a fire in my apartment block but luckily no one .....       |
| 3 Please be careful with those boxes. I don't want anything to .....        | 6 While travelling, you must always watch your bags or they might ..... |

## 3 Rewrite the newspaper headlines as complete sentences.

1 **RARE BIRD FOUND  
IN REMOTE COUNTRYSIDE**

- 1 .. *A rare bird has been found in the remote countryside.* ..

2 **NEW JERSEY TO BE HIT  
BY BAD WEATHER TOMORROW**

- 2 .....

3 **EXPERIMENTS BEING CARRIED  
OUT ON MOON ROCKS**

- 3 .....

4 **Queen WELCOMED TO  
AUSTRALIA YESTERDAY**

- 4 .....

5 **FIVE PEOPLE INJURED  
IN CAR ACCIDENT**

- 5 .....

6 **LAST NIGHT'S POP CONCERT  
CALLED OFF BECAUSE OF RAIN**

- 6 .....



## 4 Fill in the *passive* in the appropriate tense, then justify its use.

- unimportant / obvious agent
- ~~polite statement~~
- emphasis on the agent
- action more important than the agent
- process
- news report

1 ..... *polite statement* .....


(the animals / shouldn't / feed)

*The animals  
shouldn't be fed.*

2 .....



(*Oliver Twist* / write / Charles Dickens)

3 .....



(just / tell / the bad news)

4 .....



(dinner / serve)

5 .....



(the building / destroy / fire)

6 .....



(cheese / make / from milk)

## 5 Put the verbs in brackets into the correct *passive* form.

### A NEW STAR

Harry Potter is a popular film series based on the fantasy novels that 1) ..... *were written* ..... (write) by J.K. Rowling. It's about a young orphan boy who goes to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry to learn how to become a proper wizard. At Hogwarts, Potter discovers that when he was a baby, he 2) ..... (attack) by the dark wizard Lord Voldemort, who had also killed his parents.

The main character in the films, Harry Potter, 3) ..... (play) by the actor Daniel Radcliffe. Daniel Radcliffe 4) ..... (be/born) in 1989. He 5) ..... (choose) to play the leading role when he was just 11.

Today, Daniel Radcliffe is one of the most recognised faces in the world. The series has brought him great wealth, too! In 2009, he 6) ..... (rank) the 12th richest young person in the UK.

