

# 90 The passive

A number of verbs are commonly used in the passive, especially in certain contexts (see the spotlight).

The man **is said to be** carrying a weapon.  
 The boat **is reported to be** a mile from shore.  
 The teenager **is known as** a troublemaker.  
 She **is known for** her work as a therapist.  
 They **were meant to** stay together.  
 The meeting **is scheduled for** next week.  
 Four **have been short-listed** for the prize.  
 Residents **are empowered by** the new law.  
 The body **will be cremated**, not buried.  
 The man **has been jailed** for the robbery.  
 I **was overcome with** grief.  
 Two girls **have been suspended from** school.  
 We **were caught up in** a traffic jam.

## GLOSSARY

|                                        |                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>be known as sth/sb OR for sth</b>   | have a reputation as sth/sb or for sth                                                                                           |
| <b>be meant (for sth / to do sth)</b>  | be intended for sth / to do sth                                                                                                  |
| <b>be scheduled (for sth)</b>          | be arranged to happen at a particular time                                                                                       |
| <b>be short-listed (for sth)</b>       | be part of a small list for a prize, award, etc, chosen from all the people who applied for it. The winner is sb from that list. |
| <b>be empowered (to do sth) formal</b> | have or be given the power or authority to do sth SYN <b>be authorized (to do sth)</b>                                           |
| <b>be cremated</b>                     | (of a dead body) be burnt, especially as part of a funeral ceremony                                                              |
| <b>be jailed</b>                       | be sent to prison                                                                                                                |
| <b>be overcome (with sth)</b>          | be strongly affected by sth, especially sth emotional                                                                            |
| <b>be suspended sb (from sth)</b>      | be officially stopped from doing your job, going to school, etc.                                                                 |
| <b>be caught up (in sth)</b>           | be involved in sth, especially when you do not want to be                                                                        |

## SPOTLIGHT using passives

The use of the passive is more impersonal and commonly found in news reports, etc, where these passive phrases are common.

- The minister **is said to be** considering resignation.
- Food supplies **are reported to be** arriving in the country.

### 1 Complete the sentences with a suitable verb.

- The helicopter carrying the prince is ..... to be nearing the country.
- Most of the survivors were ..... with emotion when they greeted their families.
- The civil servants were ..... for giving secret information to journalists.
- When I die, I want to be ..... , not buried.
- The courts are ..... to give longer prison sentences if they wish.
- She is ..... as a rather difficult boss.
- The meeting is not ..... to start until 2 p.m.
- Sorry I'm late. I was ..... in the debate about education and couldn't leave.

### 2 Rewrite the sentences in the passive, using a suitable verb from the top of the page.

- People tell me he is dangerous. He is .....
- The judge sent him to prison for five years. He was .....
- They're going to put the film on at 9.00 p.m. The film is .....
- They considered four people from the nominations. Four people were .....
- We spent ages in a traffic jam. We were .....
- The school told the girls to leave. The girls were .....
- People know her because of her charity work. She is .....
- It wasn't my plan to join the army. I wasn't .....
- He was very emotional when he saw her. He was .....

### 3 Other verbs, taught elsewhere in the book, are also commonly used in the passive. Use the Word List if you don't know these verbs or can't remember what they mean.

- |                       |                    |                        |                   |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| be charged (with sth) | be entitled to sth | be surrounded (by sth) | be accused of sth |
| be wounded            | be stranded        | be convicted (of sth)  | be trapped        |



TEST YOURSELF