Vocabulary UNIT 2

SECTION 5

Verbs we commonly use in the passive

1. VERBS WITHOUT AN AGENT

We use some verbs more often in the passive than in the active because the agent is either unknown or obvious, or not important to what we want to say:

I **was born** in Italy
My neighbour's been **arrested**!
She **was fined** €100 for driving without insurance
Stockholm **has been dubbed** the Venice of the North
A reminder **will be sent** by post
The stadium **was built** in 1983

……..

1 Add one of these passive verbs to the sentences below. Make any necessary changes.

be deemed - be earmarked - be baffled - be jailed - be strewn

a. Their work …….. to be of the highest standard.
b. The murdered should …….. for life.
c. The floor had …….. with newspapers and old magazines
d. I …….. completely …….. and had no idea what had happened.

……..

2. ADJECTIVE OR PASSIVE?

Some verbs are so commonly used in the passive, without mentioning an agent, that they work in a similar way to -ed adjectives (see Overview, Watch out!):

I heard the news and was **horrified**.
Tuscan truffles are particularly **prized** for their pungent aroma.
I'm **gutted**! (slang = I'm very upset)

3. PREPOSITIONS

Some common passive verbs collocate with particular prepositions. Here are some examples:

The threat **was couched** in the vaguest possible terms.
We**'ve been conditioned** into accepting TV as essential.
The athlete **was acclaimed as** a national hero.
The old man **has been indicted as** a war criminal
I don't think any of these remarks **could be construed as** positive

……..

2 Add a suitable preposition to these sentences

a. The factory is scheduled …… demolition next year
b. The little boy was eventually reunited …… his parents
c. These three chapters could be subsumed …… a new heading.
d. I've been shortlisted …… the Noble Prize or Literature!

……..

4. NO PREPOSITION

Some common passive verbs, e.g. be called, be named, be deemed, be dubbed, are not commonly followed by a preposition:

All his efforts **were deemed** a complete waste of public resources
I**'ve been called** many things in my life but never 'inspired'.

5. PHRASAL VERBS

We also commonly use a particular phrasal verbs in the passive:

This coat **was handed down** to me by my older brother.
I **was** so **caught up** in my book that I failed to realise the time
The get-out clause **was written into** their contract.

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PRACTICE 5

1. Match the beginnings of the sentences (1-10) with a suitable ending (a-j).

1. The condemned man was reprieved
2. I was completely mesmerised
3. The old man was paralysed
4. Both players were penalised
5. I've been swamped
6. The meeting has been scheduled
7. Loannis was somewhat disconcerted
8. His behaviour was in danger of being construed
9. She was hospitalised
10. The factory is staffed

a. for complaining to the referee
b. by experienced machine operators
c. as aggressive
d. at the last moment
e. for next Friday
f. by his performance
g. by the lack of response
h. with offers to help
i. down one side after the stroke
j. for three months after the accident

2. **Fill each of the gaps with the most appropriate word from the list:** *haunted - touched - locked - earmarked - buffeted - possessed - hounded -blessed -doomed – destined - handicapped - dogged*

Jack, he's so unlucky: …….….. (1) by misfortune, …….….. (2) by fate at every turn and …….….. (3) by memories of the past. …….….. (4) in a battle with his family, …….….. (5) by the police and severely …….….. (6) by facial features straight out of a horror movie, he's …….….. (7) to failure.
Jill is so different: …….….. (8) with an ability to get on with everyone, …….….. (9) with genius, already …….….. (10) by her company for a top job and …….….. (11) to be a success in whatever she does, she's …….….. (12) of just every quality Jack lacks.

3. Fill each of the gaps in the following sentences with an appropriate verb from the list. The verbs should be used in the passive.

overcome deemed inundated dwarfed dubbed shrouded scheduled baffled strewn short-listed

a. The ex-champion …….….. by heat exhaustion in the final and was unable to finish the match.
b. How the intelligence services work …….….. in secrecy.
c. Since the film came out, I …….….. with the requests for my autograph.
d. His house in the foothills …….….. by the surrounding mountains.
e. Their new CD …….….. for the release next January.
f. All the doctors we saw …….….. by the reason for her illness.
g. I'm afraid your recent work …….….. totally inadequate for the task.
h. Believe it or not, last month a news reader …….….. the sexiest man on television.
i. Many people think a nineteen-year-old's first novel should …….….. for last year's National Literature prize.
j. When the police arrived, the victim's clothes …….….. all over the room.

4. For each of the following sentences, write a new sentence as similar as possible in meaning to the original sentence, but using the word given. This word must not be altered in any way.

1. Since the advertisement, we've had more applications than we can deal with. **(swamped)**

……

2. Do you feel it's wrong that this site is going to be redeveloped? **(earmarked)**

……

3. The minister's response really took the interviewer by surprise. **(aback)**

……

4. The rain forced the protest march to be cancelled. **(rained)**

……

5. There is someone in the office twenty-four hours a day. **(staffed)**

……

6. I wasn't sure what to do when the bereaved woman started laughing. **(disconcerted)**

……

7. Each new generation is told the secret recipe. **(down)**

……

8. The Trade Centre towers over the surroundings buildings. **(dwarfed)**

……

9. The Government's fiscal policy came in for sharp criticism in the press. **(pilloried)**

……

10. You cannot easily put all this information under one heading. **(subsumed)**

……

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SECTION 6

Phrasal verbs; verb + preposition

1. PHRASAL VERB, OR VERB + PREPOSITION?

Phrasal verbs are verbs which are always followed by an adverb, e.g. *cloud over*, a preposition, e.g. *come across sth / lsb*, or an adverb and a preposition, e.g. *creep up on sth / lsb*. The meaning of a phrasal verb is sometimes obvious from the meanings of its parts, e.g. fall down. But the meaning is often more idiomatic and so less obvious, e.g. *put up with sb / sth*. Phrasal verbs can be either transitive or intransitive:

When you get to the next crossroads, **turn off**.
Would you **turn off** the radio, please.

- A preposition can sometimes follow a verb which is not a phrasal verb. The preposition is part of a prepositional phrase:
  *Who lives **across the road**?*
- Some prepositions commonly follow certain verbs because of meanings and collocation:
  *This broken plate will have to be **paid for**.*
  *What are you **looking at**?*

……..

1 Which of these two sentences contains a phrasal verb?

a. The marathon runners ran over the bridge towards the finish line.
b. My friend's cat was run over by an ambulance.

……..

2. POSITION OF OBJECT

- When a phrasal verb is transitive, we can place a noun object before or after the adverb:
  Please **turn** the radio **off**. Please **turn off** the radio.
- When the object is a pronoun, it is always placed before the adverb:
  Please **turn** it **off**.
- With a verb + preposition, the preposition is placed before its object. We can't put the object between a verb and a preposition:
  I've come into a party.
  I **came into** it when my father died.
- Verbs + adverb + preposition behave in the same way as verbs + preposition:
  You'll have to **put up** with them for a little longer.

……..

2 Which of these sentences contains a phrasal verb?

a. I think somebody has been gnawing at this biscuit.
b. If you don't mind, we need to think this over.

……..

3. PREPOSITIONS AFTER PASSIVES

Note that many prepositions can follow passive verbs. However, the most common are *by* (used to mention the agent), *with* (used to mention how something is done or what it is done with) and in:

They're being cared for **by** a neighbour.
It was prepared **with** great patience.
Man was first discovered **in** East Africa

- We use other prepositions when the meaning or verb + preposition collocation requires them:
  Money has been contributed **towards** the costs.

……..

3 Choose the preposition which best completes this sentence.

Any gain must be balanced …… any potential loss.
a towards **b** to **c** against **d** for

……..

- Some prepositions of movement make passive transformations difficult In these cases, we use other verbs:
  They all **ran** laughing **into** the room
  (✗) ~~The room was run into.~~
  (✓) The room **was son filled with people laughing**.

……..

PRACTICE 6

1 Choose the preposition that best completes each sentence.

1. My attention was drawn …… the picture on far wall.
   a with **b** to **c** for **d** on
2. The stolen paintings were eventually restored …… their rightful owner.
   a for **b** by **c** to **d** with
3. Italy were knocked …… the World Cup.
   a into **b** away from **c** out of **d** forward to
4. The argument is centred …… whether or not lower the age limit.
   a on **b** towards **c** of **d** about
5. Emphasis is placed …… practical training.
   a over **b** with **c** by **d** on
6. The younger sons consider themselves to have been robbed …… their rightful inheritance.
   a by **b** with **c** around **d** of
7. The discussion will be divided …… three parts for the sake of clarity.
   a to **b** for **c** into **d** with
8. The white Audi was eliminated …… police enquiries at an early stage.
   a with **b** from **c** of **d** for

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9. A whole host of criticisms have been levelled …… the committee.
   a against **b** towards **c** by **d** for
10. The final cost has been estimated …… anything between four and five million dollars.
   a against **b** to **c** at **d** in

2 Fill each of the gaps with a suitable passive verb in such a way that the new sentence is as similar in meaning as possible to the sentence above it.

a. They *moved towards* the piazza from all sides.
   The piazza …….. from all sides.
b. The two sides *came to* an agreement after hours of negotiation.
   Agreement …….. after hours of negotiation.
c. The men *poured* concrete into the hole until it was full.
   The hole …….. with concrete.
d. People *came into* the room through a sort of tunnel.
   The room …….. through a sort of tunnel.
e. Everyone *got out of* the stadium as the fire spread.
   The stadium …….. as the fire spread.

3 Underline the word that best fits the sentence.

1. Do you think he could be …… upon to make a speech after the presentation?
   a prevailed **b** impelled **c** urged **d** pressured
2. I'm afraid a penalty clause has been written ……your contract.
   a out of **b** into **c** down **d** away for
3. I was completely …… over by their warm reception.
   a pushed **b** run **c** bowled **d** thrown
4. I think the implications have been rather quickly ..... over.
   a painted **b** removed **c** sprayed **d** glossed
5. A number of very interesting proposals have been put ……
   a across **b** down **c** forward **d** through

4 Finish each of the following sentences in such a way that it is as similar as possible to the sentence before it.

a. The sports centre presents a certificate of attendance to every student when they leave.
   All . . . . . .
b. I don't think they should have pressure put on them to make a decision.
   I don't think they should be. . . . . .
c. The price is exclusive of airport taxes.
   Airport taxes . . . . . .
d. The way the managing director behaved last night really shocked me.
   I . . . . . .
e. Several people came up to me to congratulate me.
   I . . . . . .
f. I grew up in a little village on the Scottish border.
   I was . . . . . .
g. The letters will have your name printed on them.
   The letters will be. . . . . .
h. The couple didn't tell the police about the theft until it was far too late.
   The theft . . . . . .
i. An old woman once tricked my father into giving her several hundred pounds.
   My father was once conned out . . . . . .
j. Government guidelines really do emphasise the importance of starting education early.
   A lot of emphasis . . . . . .

5 For each of the sentences below, write a new sentence as similar as possible in meaning to the original sentence, but using the word given.

a. An awful lot has been omitted from the final draft of the agreement. **out**
   ……
b. There were thousands of sunbathers on the beach. **packed**
   ……
c. Our founder was given an honorary doctorate in law by Edinburgh University. **conferred**
   ……
d. My uncle underwent a five-hour operation to remove the growth that had been diagnosed. **operated**
   ……
e. My watch and traveller's cheques were stolen while I was abroad. **robbed**
   ……
f. The accused claimed he hit the police officer as a result of provocation. **provoked**
   ……
g. Both parties ripped the contract to pieces. **torn**
   ……
h. Many of us were shocked when a former actor took the oath as President of the United States. **Sworn**
   ……
i. The present came as a complete surprise to me. **aback**
   ……
j. Trading activities in the war-stricken area have been reduced. **scaled**
   ……

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