

Passive Voice / Causative Form 7

Passive Voice

The **passive** is formed with the appropriate tense of the verb **to be** + **past participle**. Only transitive verbs (verbs which take an object) can be put into the passive.

	Active Voice	Passive Voice
Present Simple	He gives lectures.	Lectures are given .
Present Continuous	He is giving a lecture.	A lecture is being given .
Past Simple	He gave a lecture.	A lecture was given .
Past Continuous	He was giving a lecture.	A lecture was being given .
Future Simple	He will give a lecture.	A lecture will be given .
Present Perfect	He has given a lecture.	A lecture has been given .
Past Perfect	He had given a lecture.	A lecture had been given .
Future Perfect	He will have given a lecture.	A lecture will have been given .
Present Infinitive	He should give a lecture.	A lecture should be given .
Perfect Infinitive	He should have given a lecture.	A lecture should have been given .
-ing form	She remembers him giving a lecture.	She remembers a lecture being given .
Perfect -ing form	Having given the lecture, ...	The lecture having been given , ...
modal + be + p.p.	He must give a lecture.	The lecture must be given .

- Present Perfect Continuous, Future Continuous and Past Perfect Continuous are not normally used in the passive.
- **Get** is used in colloquial English instead of **be** to express something happening by accident.
She'll **get** killed if she goes on driving like that.

Use

The passive is used: a) when the person who performs the action (**agent**) is **unknown, unimportant** or **obvious from the context** Her flat **was broken into** yesterday. (by a burglar - obvious agent) b) to **emphasise** the agent Her wedding dress was delivered to her **by the dressmaker herself** yesterday. c) to make **statements** more **formal** or **polite** My dress **has been ruined**. (more polite than saying "You have ruined my dress.") and d) when we are more interested in the action than the agent, such as in **news reports, formal notices, instructions, processes, headlines, advertisements** etc. A Christmas bazaar **will be held** tomorrow.

150 Put the verbs in brackets into the correct passive form.

- Holland ...**is said**... (say) to be one of the prettiest countries in Europe.
- I hate (tell) lies.
- My television (deliver) tomorrow.
- Their telephone (install) yesterday.
- Teachers ought (pay) a higher salary.
- Hotel rooms must (vacate) by 12 noon.
- The villa (sell) by public auction next week.
- She hopes her home (build) by May.
- Heartbreak House* (write) by George Bernard Shaw.
- My car (respray) at the moment.
- Hopefully, she (promote) by the end of next month.
- I wish I (teach) how to type when I was at school.
- Your application should (hand in) last Monday. It's too late now I'm afraid!
- The wedding reception must (book) a month before the wedding.
- The building (evacuate) ten minutes before the explosion took place.



7 Passive Voice / Causative Form

Changing from Active into Passive

- The object of the active verb becomes the subject in the passive sentence. The active verb changes into a passive form and the subject of the active verb becomes the agent, which is either introduced with "by" or is omitted.

Active Voice		
subject	verb	object
John	posted	the letters.

Passive Voice		
subject	verb	agent
The letters	were posted	by John.

- By + agent** is used to say who or what did the action. *She was knocked over by a car.* **With + instrument / material** is used to say what the agent used or after past participles such as coloured, crammed, crowded, filled, flavoured, packed etc. *She was killed with a hammer.* **By + agent** is omitted when the agent is **unknown, unimportant, obvious from the context** or referred to by words such as: **someone, people, I**, etc. *They revealed the truth. → The truth was revealed. ("by them" is omitted)*
- Verbs which take who objects (*give, offer* etc) form their passive in two ways; it is more usual to start the sentence with the person object, not the thing object. *They offered Ann a bunch of flowers. → Ann was offered a bunch of flowers. (more usual than: A bunch of flowers was offered to Ann.)*
- Verbs followed by a preposition (*accuse of, take down* etc) take the preposition immediately after them when turned into the passive. *She took down the minutes of the meeting. → The minutes of the meeting were taken down.*
- In **passive questions** with **who, whom** or **which** we do not omit **by**. *Who gave you this information? → Who were you given this information by?*
- Hear, help, make, see** are followed by a **to-infinitive** in the passive. *She made me work overtime. → I was made to work overtime.* Note that **hear, see, watch** can be followed by a **present participle** in the active and passive. *We saw her crying. → She was seen crying.*

151 Change the sentences from the active into the passive. Omit the agent where it can be omitted.

- Santa Claus will leave your presents in the stocking. ...*Your presents will be left in the stocking by Santa Claus...*
- Bad organisation spoiled their holiday.
- Teachers mark hundreds of exam papers every year.
- Who wrote *Romeo and Juliet*?
- You should dry your hair before you go out.
- You mustn't tell him the truth.
- She likes people taking her to the theatre.
- Why didn't they give her the job?
- She told them not to tell anyone.
- They should have given us a bonus.
- The doctors will bring him in for an examination.
- Fog has delayed all flights.
- She didn't send me any parcels.
- She had cleaned the house before I got there.
- When we arrived at the hotel, they had filled all the rooms.
- Why haven't you invited Mary to the party?
- Paula will help you finish your project.
- The mayor is opening the new community centre next week.
- We heard her complaining strongly to the manager.
- You can leave your bags at the left-luggage office.
- Workmen found some antique vases in the old house.
- The architects have drawn up plans for the new library.
- Who gave him the new car?
- They are going to set the lion free next week.
- What time do you expect him to arrive?



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