

Reporting with passives

We can use passive structures with infinitives in formal writing to report opinions and beliefs.

Present and Future – use an infinitive (to be, to affect)

Many people think Messi is the best player ever.

Messi **is thought to be** the best player ever.

Scientists know that pollen allergy affects a lot of people.

Pollen allergies **are known to affect** a lot of people.

Journalists expect that the president will give a speech at 2pm.

The president **is expected to give** a speech at 2pm.

Past – use a perfect infinitive (to have been, to have made, to have done)

Experts think that Van Gogh painted the painting in 1888.

Van Gogh **is thought to have painted** the painting in 1888.

The police think he killed his wife.

He **is thought to have killed** his wife.

Verbs used in this way included: **believe, consider, estimate, expect, know, report, say, think, understand** and **“to be rumoured”**.

Practice:

Change the second sentence using the passive structure.

1. Experts say that 8 hours sleep is the perfect amount.

8 hours sleep _____

2. They expect that 2000 people will attend the festival.

2000 people _____

3. Police think that the stolen money is buried in the garden.

The stolen money _____

4. There are rumours that Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez are dating again.

Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez _____

5. Experts estimate that 20 people died in the fire.

20 people _____

6. Journalists report that Kanye West and Kim Kardashian have broken up.

Kanye West and Kim Kardashian _____

7. Scientists believe that the big bang happened 13.7 billion years ago.

The big bang _____