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First Stage
English Grammar



Passive Voice

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THE PASSIVE VOICE

INTRODUCTION

The passive voice is a grammatical structure in which the focus is on the action or the receiver of the action, not on who performs it.

Active: My grandfather planted this tree.

Passive: This tree was planted by my grandfather.

When to Use Passive Voice

Passive voice is commonly used when:

1. The agent is **unknown**

Our car was stolen last night.

2. The agent is **unimportant**

The experiment was done in 2023.

3. The focus is on **the action or result**

c. The office was painted last week.

4. **Academic and scientific writing** (objectivity)

Data were collected from three sources.

5. To **protect the subject**

The window is broken.

A. Present Simple

Active: Subject + verb base or with (s) + object

Passive: Object + verb to be (is, am, are) + V (p.p) + by agent (optional)

Agent: refers to the doer of the action.

To convert active sentence to passive sentence, we should follow the following five steps:

1. Tense

2. Object (we put the object at the beginning of the sentence)

3. Object (singular or plural)

4. Put verb to be (is, am, are) depending on the object

5. Verb → P.P.

6. By agent (optional)

-The student writes the essay (active) → The essay is written (by the students)

Passive

-He opens the door. (active) → The door is opened. (passive)

- The room is cleaned by her. (passive) → She cleans the room. (active)

-They finish the work. → The work is finished (by them)

B. Past Simple

Active: S. + verb (past form) + obj.

Passive: Obj + was/ were + verb (p.p.), (by agent)

-The police arrested the thief → The thief was arrested by the police.

- He repaired the car → The car was repaired by him.
- The teacher explained the lesson →The lesson was explained by the teacher.
- They did not finish the work →The work was not finished by them.
- She didn't invite me to the party →I was not invited to the party by her.

C. Present Continuous Passive

Active: S. (am / is / are) + verb (ing.) + obj.

Passive: Obj. (am / is / are + being + past participle)

- The teacher is explaining the lesson → The lesson is being explained.
- The workers are cleaning the street → The street is being cleaned.
- The researcher is analyzing the data → The data are being analyzed.
- They are building a bridge → A bridge is being built.

D. Present Perfect Passive

Active: S. + (has / have + been + past participle) + obj.

Passive: Obj. (has / have + been + past participle)

- The student has completed the assignment→ The assignment has been completed.
- Scientists have discovered a new species → A new species has been discovered.
- The company has reduced pollution → Pollution has been reduced.
- The committee have approved the plan → The plan has been approved.

E. Future Passive

Active: S. + will + verb (base) + Obj.

Passive: Obj. (will + be + past participle), (by agent)

- The government will implement the policy → The policy will be implemented.
- They will publish the results next month → The results will be published next month.
- The organization will protect the environment → The environment will be protected.
- The teacher will explain the rules → The rules will be explained.

F. Past Perfect

Active: S. + (had+ been + past participle) + obj

Passive: Object + had been + past participle (+ by agent)

Active: She had finished the report. → The report had been finished by her

- They had cleaned the house before the guests arrived → The house had been cleaned before the guests arrived by them
- Someone had stolen my wallet → My wallet had been stolen by someone.
- The mechanic had repaired the car → The car had been repaired by the mechanic.
- The teacher had explained the lesson → The lesson had been explained by the teacher.
- They had not completed the project → The project had not been completed by them.

Rewrite these sentences in the passive voice:

1. Someone built this house 200 years ago.

2. A thief stole my purse.

3. The police will arrest the robbers.

4. They produce cars in this factory.

5. They serve breakfast at eight o'clock every day.

6. People throw away tones of rubbish every day.

7. They make coffee in Brazil.

8. Someone stole Jim's bike last night.

They haven't delivered the food yet.

9. Shakespeare wrote King Lear.

10. They have to answer the questions on this sheet.

11. Has anybody put the cases upstairs?

12. Someone should take this rubbish away.

13. They'll ask you a lot of questions.

8. Someone's going to send her some flowers.

9. They didn't pay me much for that job.

10. Have they offered him a better job?

11. They told us a secret.

12. Would they lend me their car?

13. People should send their complaints to the head office.

14. They had to postpone the meeting because of illness.

15. They are going to hold next year's congress in San Francisco.

Rewrite these sentences in the active voice:

This road is not used very often by people

I was accused of stealing the money by somebody.

A new ring-road is being built round the city by the government.

The date of the meeting has been changed by them.

My shoes had been cleaned and my suit had been brushed by somebody.

This room is used only on special occasions by us.
