

## PASSIVE VOICE

**Form:** verb *to be* + *past participle* of the active verb (regular or irregular)

When we change an active sentence into a passive, we have to observe the rules:

**the direct complement of the active sentence is now the subject of the passive sentence.**

This way the information we think is more important comes at the beginning of the sentence:

**Active:** *Pupils do the final exams in the Assembly Hall.*  
(Here the subject of the sentence, ***pupils***, is important)

**Passive:** *The final exams are done in the Assembly Hall.*  
(In this case, it is the complement, ***the final exams***, what is important)

The tense of the main verb<sup>(1)</sup> in the active sentence informs us of the tense we must use in the passive with the verb 'to be'<sup>(2)</sup> before the past participle. You must also pay a lot of attention to the concordance between the verb tense and the subject, either in the active or in the passive sentence.

<sup>(1)</sup>(present simple or past simple)

<sup>(2)</sup>(am, is, are or was, were)

<b>Present Simple:</b>	am played	is played	are played
	am written	is written	are written

<b>Past Simple:</b>	was played	were played
	was written	were written

### Examples:

#### **Present simple:**

Active:	Astronomers <b>find</b> new planets in our solar system every day.
Passive:	New planets <b>are found</b> in our solar system every day.
Active:	Channel 9 <b>transmits</b> the football match.
Passive:	The football match <b>is transmitted</b> by Channel 9.

Active:	The pupils <b>don't study</b> German in this school.
Passive:	German <b>isn't studied</b> in this school.
Active:	The teacher <b>doesn't correct</b> the exams without names.
Passive:	The exams without names <b>aren't corrected</b> .

Active:	<b>Do</b> they <b>speak</b> Italian in Switzerland? Yes, they do.
Passive:	<b>Is</b> Italian <b>spoken</b> in Switzerland? Yes, it is.
Active:	<b>Does</b> the teacher <b>explain</b> the Grammar rules in class? Yes, he does.
Passive:	<b>Are</b> the Grammar rules <b>explained</b> in class? Yes, they are.

#### **Past simple:**

Active:	Some of the pupils <b>wrote</b> the play for the school party.
Passive:	The play for the school party <b>was written</b> by some of the pupils.
Active:	The teacher <b>revised</b> all the exams.
Passive:	All the exams <b>were revised</b> by the teacher.

Active:	They <b>didn't buy</b> the computer in the new shop.
Passive:	The computer <b>wasn't bought</b> in the new shop.
Active:	The new doctor <b>didn't operate</b> the injured people.
Passive:	The injured people <b>weren't operated</b> by the new doctor.

Active:	<b>Did</b> you <b>send</b> the invitations last Sunday? Yes, we did.
Passive:	<b>Were</b> the invitations <b>sent</b> last Sunday? Yes, they were.
Active:	<b>Did</b> they <b>bring</b> the candidate on time for the interview? Yes, they did.
Passive:	<b>Was</b> the candidate <b>brought</b> on time for the interview? Yes, he was.

**PASSIVE VOICE. THE AGENT: It is the person or thing that performs the action.**

The agent with <b>by</b>	Active: R. L. Stevenson wrote Treasure Island. Passive: Treasure Island was written <b>by R. L. Stevenson.</b> (In this sentence the agent is <b>R.L.Stevenson</b> )
The agent with <b>with</b>	Active: We used a magnetic card to open the room door. Passive: A magnetic card was used to open the room door. But... Passive: The room door was opened <b>with a magnetic card.</b> (In this sentence the instrument of the action is <b>a magnetic card</b> )
The agent is unknown	All my jewells were stolen last night! ( <i>We don't know who did it</i> )
The agent isn't important	The castle of the Alhambra was built in the 8 <sup>th</sup> century. Romeo and Juliet was written / published in 1595. ( <i>In these examples, only the date is important</i> )
The agent is understood	A great amount of money was stolen in the bank yesterday. An ancient tomb was discovered in Egypt last week. ( <i>You can see it is not necessary to express the agent because you know that banks are usually robbed by thieves, and that Egyptian tombs are usually discovered by archeologists</i> )  but... The money was stolen <b>by robbers wearing masks.</b> or... The tomb was discovered <b>by British archaeologists.</b> ( <i>In these examples, it is important to know who did the action</i> )
Impersonal agent	The rock concert was cancelled. All the roads were closed yesterday in the north of the country. ( <i>We don't know or we don't mention who did the action</i> )

**Grammar: TURN INTO THE PASSIVE FORM (use BY or WITH only if it is really necessary)**

Two French brothers invented the cinema.	Does the new waiter serve the food?
The workers built the new hotel in just a few months.	Do you play games in Physical Education?
They sell expensive cars at low prices in this shop.	Did the two policemen help Paul?
<i>Camela</i> sings the pretty song <i>Ay, por Dios!</i>	Does Jane pay the flat rental weekly?
The young writer Mary Shelley wrote <i>Frankenstein</i> .	Did the same player score the six goals?
They don't speak English in this restaurant.	Did they finally sell their country house?
Spielberg didn't direct the film <i>Troy</i> .	When does the school term finish?
The teacher doesn't write the sentences on the board.	Why did they throw the books to the litter?
A thief stole some jewels in the corner shop.	Why do they close the shops on Sundays?
Some scientists compare the brain to a computer.	Where did the team play their last match?
The teacher gives the pupils the exam results after the test.*	Somebody recommended me another dentist.*
Microsoft sent the customers an e-mail last week.*	They gave the little girl a small cat.*
They offered Jenny a bigger salary last week.*	Carol teaches Geography to small children.*
His parents promised Adam a new computer.*	Someone wrote Susan a lovely poem.*
Does the new waiter serve the food to the customers?*	Somebody sent an anonymous letter to Susan.*

**ACTIVE into PASSIVE.**

**STRUCTURES:**

1. Many people study English in our universities.
2. People play football all over the world.
3. The captain **always** chooses the team for the match.
4. The teacher explains a new lesson every month.
5. Pupils **usually** do the extra activities at home.
6. Millions of people speak Spanish in South America.
7. Students write the answers on a piece of paper.
8. The pupils bring the new materials for the projects.

Present Simple affirmative

9. We don't use pencils in the exams.
10. *The teachers don't permit the pupils to cheat. (CD + CI)*
11. We don't study Latin in our school.
12. They don't admit dogs in this restaurant.
13. The teacher doesn't write the sentences on the board.
14. We don't say bad words in class.

Present Simple negative

15. Do they wash the floors here?
16. Do they clean the rooms every day?
17. Do you sing English songs in class?
18. Do you speak English in this shop?
19. Does Julie organise the graduation party?

Present Simple interrogative

20. When does he finish his Italian lessons?
21. Where do you keep your secrets?
22. Why do they check the computer every day?
23. Where does she sell her paintings?
24. Why do they close the schools at weekends?

Present Simple Wh- questions

- .....
25. Lots of people sang a beautiful song of peace at the demonstration.
  26. Steven Spielberg directed Jurassic Park.
  27. They shot the film in the Brazilian jungle.
  28. Jules Verne wrote *Around the world in 80 days*.
  29. They kept the money in a security box.
  30. Later, they spent all the money in a new car.
  31. They played the football match in the new stadium.
  32. The pupils organised the end-of-year party.
  33. The UNO troops bombed the north of Iraq last night.

Past Simple affirmative

34. The Spanish players didn't win the match.
35. They didn't accept my apologies.
36. We didn't find the lost money.
37. They didn't forget that horrible accident all these years.
38. My sister didn't write those letters.
39. *They didn't tell the truth to the police. (CD + CI)*

Past Simple negative

40. Did the two robbers steal the money?
41. Did the shops open last Sunday?
42. Did the pupils understand all the questions?
43. Did the new worker make the wall?
44. Did your parents hear your conversation?

Past Simple interrogative

45. Where did they leave the luggage?
46. Why did Anne break her engagement?
47. When did they repair the broken car?
48. Where did you buy the calculator?
49. Where did the hunter kill the lion?

Past Simple Wh- questions

## 1. Present Simple Passive.

### 1.1. Complete the sentences with: am, is, are.

More chocolate ..... eaten in the USA than in any other country.

Not very much ..... known about Shakespeare's childhood.

We ..... woken by the birds every morning.

I ..... paid on the first of every month.

..... you seen by the same doctor every week?

Spanish ..... spoken in many American countries.

### 1.2. Put the verbs in the simple present passive.

A lot of olive oil ..... in Mediterranean cooking. (use)

Arabic ..... from right to left. (write)

Jaguar cars ..... in America. (not make)

Our classrooms ..... every day. (clean)

These programmes ..... by millions of people every week. (watch)

Spanish ..... in Brazil. (not speak)

## 2. Past Simple Passive.

### 2.1. Complete the sentences with was / were.

Most of the matches ..... won by Spanish teams.

These keys ..... found in the changing room – are they yours?

I ..... stopped by a policeman in the city centre last night.

We couldn't find the station, but we ..... helped by a very kind woman.

Yesterday a man ..... caught trying to steal a parked car.

The lost soldiers ..... found in a ruined house.

### 2.2. Put the verbs in the simple past passive.

Our passports ..... by a tall man in a uniform. (take)

These books ..... in the classroom yesterday. (leave)

My money ..... because they wanted to invite me. (not accept)

I don't think this room ..... yesterday. (clean)

My father ..... by the noise in the outside. (not wake)

We ..... when we finished our work. (not pay)

## THE PASSIVE VOICE. Present Simple – Past Simple

### 1. Complete the sentences using the passive voice. Use by or with:

A friend gave Tina a gift for her brother. / Tina .....

Keneth Branagh plays the part of Hamlet. / The part of Hamlet .....

They used a screwdriver to open the window. / The window .....

Our dog bit a lot of people. / A lot of people .....

A stone broke one of the windows of the house. / One of the windows of the house .....

The police used a special key to open the door. / The door .....

A Japanese millionaire bought the painting. / The painting .....

Matt Groening created the first *Simpsons* cartoon in 1989. / The first Simpson cartoon .....

About 500 million people watch TV every day. / TV .....

They used 300 TV cameras to film the royal wedding. / 300 TV cameras .....

**2. Write these sentences in the passive, but do not write the underlined words.**

- a) Workers build thousands of new buildings every year.
- b) The two teams played the match last Sunday.
- c) Nowadays people cut down many trees for no reason.
- d) The police asked Jane to go to the police station.
- e) Someone stole my bike.
- f) The baker sold all the cakes in the shop.

**3. Complete the sentences using the passive:**

Hundreds of people visit the castle every year. / The castle .....

Three masked men kidnapped the bank manager. / The bank manager .....

Howard Carter discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922. / The tomb .....

Millions of people enjoy Susan's book. / Susan's book .....

Heavy traffic causes a lot of pollution. / A lot of pollution .....

Everyone decided to have another meeting on Friday. / It .....

**1. TURN INTO THE PASSIVE FORM (use BY only if it is really necessary)**

Many people watched the football match on a big screen outside the stadium.

Does the man repair the cars in the garage or in the factory?

A young girl plays the role of Snowwhite.

Did they take the girl to hospital after the accident?

Do you write the sentences on you notebooks?

Mozart didn't compose the opera *Aida*.

They don't tell the pupils the exam results till the end of June.\*

Where did they sell the painting by Picasso? At Christie's.

They offered us a piece of cake.\*

Do they transmit the festival on satellite?

When do they open the new disco? Next month.

Teachers often give pupils some useful advice.\*