

54 Passive verb forms

The passive

1 Introduction

A passive verb is a form of be + a past participle, e.g. is baked, was worn. Some participles are irregular (see pages 382–3).



2 Summary of verb tenses

	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
Present Simple:	We bake the bread here.	The bread is baked here.
Present Continuous:	We are baking the bread.	The bread is being baked .
Present Perfect:	We have baked the bread.	The bread has been baked .
Past Simple:	We baked the bread yesterday.	The bread was baked yesterday.
Past Continuous:	We were baking the bread.	The bread was being baked .
Past Perfect:	We had baked the bread.	The bread had been baked .

We form negatives and questions in the same way as in active sentences.
 The bread **isn't baked** in a factory. The jacket **hasn't been worn** for years.
 Where is the bread baked? * Has the jacket ever **been worn** by anyone else?

3 The future and modal verbs in the passive

We use be + a past participle after will, be going to, can, must, have to, should, etc.
 The gates **will be closed** this evening. This rubbish **should be thrown away**.
 The machine **has to be repaired**. The news **might be announced** soon.
 Seats **may not be reserved**. How **can the problem be solved**?

	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
Future:	We will bake the bread next. We are going to bake the bread.	The bread will be baked next. The bread is going to be baked .
Modal verb:	We should bake the bread soon. We ought to bake the bread.	The bread should be baked soon. The bread ought to be baked .

4 The passive with get

We sometimes use get in the passive instead of be.
 Lots of postmen **get bitten** by dogs. I'm always **getting chosen** for the worst jobs.
 Last week Laura **got moved** to another department.
 Get is informal. We often use it for something happening by accident or unexpectedly.

In negatives and questions in the Present Simple and Past Simple, we use a form of do.
 The windows **don't get cleaned** very often. How **did the painting get damaged**?

We also use get in these expressions: get dressed/changed, get washed (= wash oneself), get engaged/married/divorced, get started (= start), get lost (= lose one's way).
 Emma and Matthew **might get married**. Without a map we **soon got lost**.

A Present Continuous passive (2)

Look at the pictures and say what is happening. Use these subjects: *the car, dinner, a flag, some houses, the seals*. Use these verbs: *build, feed, raise, repair, serve*.



- ▶ The car **is being repaired**.
 1 3
 2 4

B Passive verb tenses (2)

Complete the information about Barford Hall. Put in the correct form of these verbs.

▶ build (Past Simple)	2 use (Past Continuous)	4 not look (Past Perfect)	6 use (Present Simple)
1 own (Present Simple)	3 buy (Past Simple)	5 do (Present Perfect)	

The building at the end of the High Street is Barford Hall, which (▶) **was built** in 1827. Today the Hall (1) by Bardale Council. It (2) as a warehouse when it (3) by the Council in 1952, and it (4) after very well. Since then a lot of work (5) on it, and these days the Hall (6) as an arts centre.

C The future and modal verbs in the passive (3)

A press conference is being held. Put in the correct form of the verbs.

- ▶ Reporter: Can this new drug prolong human life?
 Professor: Yes, we believe that human life **can be prolonged** by the drug.
 1 Reporter: Are you going to do any more tests on the drug?
 Professor: Yes, further tests soon.
 2 Reporter: What the drug ?
 Professor: It will be called Bio-Meg.
 3 Reporter: Can people buy the drug now?
 Professor: No, it by the public yet.
 4 Reporter: Do you think the company should sell this drug?
 Professor: Yes, I think Bio-Meg to anyone who wants it.

D The passive with get (4)

Put in get or got and the past participle of these verbs: *break, change, divorce, hurt, lose*

- ▶ If we're going out to the theatre, I'd better **get changed**
 1 Daniel when he tried to break up a fight.
 2 I know the way. We won't
 3 You'd better wrap up the glasses, so they don't
 4 They were only married a year before they