

Passive 1 (is done / was done)

A Study this example:



This house was built in 1935.

Was built is passive.

Compare active and passive:

Somebody built this house in 1935. (active)
subject object

This house was built in 1935. (passive)
subject

When we use an active verb, we say what the subject does:

- My grandfather was a builder. He built this house in 1935.
It's a big company. It employs two hundred people.

When we use a passive verb, we say what happens to the subject:

- This house is quite old. It was built in 1935.
Two hundred people are employed by the company.

B

When we use the passive, who or what causes the action is often unknown or unimportant:

- A lot of money was stolen in the robbery. (somebody stole it, but we don't know who)
Is this room cleaned every day? (does somebody clean it? - it's not important who)

If we want to say who does or what causes the action, we use by ... :

- This house was built by my grandfather.
Two hundred people are employed by the company.

C

The passive is be (is/was etc.) + past participle (done/cleaned/seen etc.):
(be) done (be) cleaned (be) damaged (be) built (be) seen etc.

For irregular past participles (done/seen/known etc.), see Appendix 1.

Study the active and passive forms of the present simple and past simple:

Present simple

active: clean(s) / see(s) etc.

Somebody cleans this room every day.

passive: am/is/are + cleaned/seen etc.

This room is cleaned every day.

- Many accidents are caused by careless driving.
I'm not often invited to parties.
How is this word pronounced?

Past simple

active: cleaned/saw etc.

Somebody cleaned this room yesterday.

passive: was/were + cleaned/seen etc.

This room was cleaned yesterday.

- We were woken up by a loud noise during the night.
'Did you go to the party?' 'No, I wasn't invited.'
How much money was stolen in the robbery?

42.1 Complete the sentences using one of these verbs in the correct form, present or past:

- cause damage hold invite make
overtake show surround translate write

- Many accidents are caused by dangerous driving.
Cheese from milk.
The roof of the building in a storm a few days ago.
You to the wedding. Why didn't you go?
A cinema is a place where films .
In the United States, elections for president every four years.
Originally the book in Spanish, and a few years ago it into English.
Although we were driving quite fast, we by a lot of other cars.
You can't see the house from the road. It by trees.

42.2 Write questions using the passive. Some are present and some are past.

- Ask about glass. (how / make?) How is glass made?
Ask about television. (when / invent?)
Ask about mountains. (how / form?)
Ask about Pluto (the planet). (when / discover?)
Ask about silver. (what / use for?)

42.3 Put the verb into the correct form, present simple or past simple, active or passive.

- It's a big factory. Five hundred people are employed (employ) there.
Did somebody clean (somebody / clean) this room yesterday?
Water (cover) most of the earth's surface.
How much of the earth's surface (cover) by water?
The park gates (lock) at 6.30 p.m. every evening.
The letter (post) a week ago and it (arrive) yesterday.
The boat hit a rock and (sink) quickly. Fortunately everybody (rescue).
Richard's parents (die) when he was very young. He and his sister (bring up) by their grandparents.
I was born in London, but I (grow up) in Canada.
While I was on holiday, my camera (steal) from my hotel room.
While I was on holiday, my camera (disappear) from my hotel room.
Why (Sue / resign) from her job? Didn't she enjoy it?
Why (Bill / sack) from his job? What did he do wrong?
The company is not independent. It (own) by a much larger company.
I saw an accident last night. Somebody (call) an ambulance but nobody (injure), so the ambulance (not / need).
Where (these photographs / take)? In London? (you / take) them, or somebody else?
Sometimes it's quite noisy living here, but it's not a problem for me - I (not / bother) by it.

42.4 Rewrite these sentences. Instead of using somebody, they, people etc., write a passive sentence.

- Somebody cleans the room every day. The room is cleaned every day.
They cancelled all flights because of fog. All
People don't use this road much.
Somebody accused me of stealing money. I
How do people learn languages? How
Somebody warned us not to go out alone.

Passive 2 (be done / been done / being done)

A

Study the following active and passive forms:

Infinitive

active: (to) do/clean/see etc.

Somebody will clean **the room** later.

passive: (to) be + done/cleaned/seen etc.

The room will be cleaned later.

- The situation is serious. Something must be done before it's too late.
- A mystery is something that can't be explained.
- The music was very loud and could be heard from a long way away.
- A new supermarket is going to be built next year.
- Please go away. I want to be left alone.

B

Perfect infinitive

active: (to) have + done/cleaned/seen etc.

Somebody should have cleaned **the room**.

passive: (to) have been + done/cleaned/seen etc.

The room should have been cleaned.

- I haven't received the letter yet. It might have been sent to the wrong address.
- If you hadn't left the car unlocked, it wouldn't have been stolen.
- There were some problems at first, but they seem to have been solved.

C

Present perfect

active: have/has + done etc.

The room looks nice. Somebody has cleaned **it**.

passive: have/has been + done etc.

The room looks nice. **It** has been cleaned.

- Have you heard? The concert has been cancelled.
- Have you ever been bitten by a dog?
- 'Are you going to the party?' 'No, I haven't been invited.'

Past perfect

active: had + done etc.

The room looked nice. Somebody had cleaned **it**.

passive: had been + done etc.

The room looked nice. **It** had been cleaned.

- The vegetables didn't taste very good. They had been cooked too long.
- The car was three years old but hadn't been used very much.

D

Present continuous

active: am/is/are + (do)ing

Somebody is cleaning **the room** at the moment.

passive: am/is/are + being (done)

The room is being cleaned at the moment.

- There's somebody walking behind us. I think we are being followed.
- (in a shop) 'Can I help you?' 'No, thank you. I'm being served.'

Past continuous

active: was/were + (do)ing

Somebody was cleaning **the room** when I arrived.

passive: was/were + being (done)

The room was being cleaned when I arrived.

- There was somebody walking behind us. We were being followed.

Passive 1, 3 → Units 42, 44

43.1 What do these words mean? Use it can ... or it can't ... Use a dictionary if necessary.

If something is

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 washable, <u>it can be washed</u> | 4 unusable, |
| 2 unbreakable, it | 5 invisible, |
| 3 edible, | 6 portable, |

43.2 Complete these sentences with the following verbs (in the correct form):

arrest carry cause ~~do~~ make repair ~~send~~ spend wake up

Sometimes you need have (might have, should have etc.).

- 1 The situation is serious. Something must be done before it's too late.
- 2 I haven't received the letter. It might have been sent to the wrong address.
- 3 A decision will not until the next meeting.
- 4 Do you think that more money should on education?
- 5 This road is in very bad condition. It should a long time ago.
- 6 The injured man couldn't walk and had to
- 7 It's not certain how the fire started, but it might by an electrical fault.
- 8 I told the hotel receptionist I wanted to at 6.30 the next morning.
- 9 If you hadn't pushed the policeman, you wouldn't

43.3 Rewrite these sentences. Instead of using somebody or they etc., write a passive sentence.

- 1 Somebody has cleaned the room. The room has been cleaned.
- 2 They have postponed the meeting. The
- 3 Somebody is using the computer at the moment.
The computer
- 4 I didn't realise that somebody was recording our conversation.
I didn't realise that
- 5 When we got to the stadium, we found that they had cancelled the game.
When we got to the stadium, we found that
- 6 They are building a new ring road round the city.
.....
- 7 They have built a new hospital near the airport.
.....

43.4 Make sentences from the words in brackets. Sometimes the verb is active, sometimes passive.

- 1 There's somebody behind us. (I think / we / follow) I think we're being followed.
- 2 This room looks different. (you / paint / the walls?) Have you painted the walls?
- 3 My car has disappeared. (it / steal!) It
- 4 My umbrella has disappeared. (somebody / take) Somebody
- 5 Sam gets a higher salary now. (he / promote) He
- 6 Ann can't use her office at the moment. (it / redecorate) It
- 7 The photocopier broke down yesterday, but now it's OK. (it / work / again ; it / repair)
It It
- 8 When I went into the room, I saw that the table and chairs were not in the same place.
(the furniture / move) The
- 9 The man next door disappeared six months ago. (he / not / see / since then)
He
- 10 I wonder how Jane is these days. (I / not / see / for ages)
I
- 11 A friend of mine was mugged on his way home a few nights ago. (you / ever / mug?)
.....

→ Additional exercises 22-24 (pages 314-15)

Passive 3

A I was offered ... / we were given ... etc.
 Some verbs can have two objects. For example, give:
 Somebody gave the police the information. (= Somebody gave the information to the police)
object 1 object 2

So it is possible to make two passive sentences:
 The police were given the information. or
 The information was given to the police.

Other verbs which can have two objects are:
 ask offer pay show teach tell

When we use these verbs in the passive, most often we begin with the *person*:
 I was offered the job, but I refused it. (= they offered me the job)
 You will be given plenty of time to decide. (= we will give you plenty of time)
 Have you been shown the new machine? (= has anybody shown you?)
 The men were paid £400 to do the work. (= somebody paid the men £400)

B I don't like being ...
 The passive of doing/seeing etc. is being done / being seen etc. Compare:

active: I don't like people telling me what to do.
passive: I don't like being told what to do.

- I remember being taken to the zoo when I was a child.
 (= I remember somebody taking me to the zoo)
- Steve hates being kept waiting. (= he hates people keeping him waiting)
- We managed to climb over the wall without being seen. (= without anybody seeing us)

C I was born ...

We say 'I was born ...' (not I am born):

- I was born in Chicago.
- Where were you born? (not Where are you born?) } *past*

but How many babies are born every day? *present*

D Get

You can use get instead of be in the passive:
 There was a fight at the party, but nobody got hurt. (= nobody was hurt)
 I don't often get invited to parties. (= I'm not often invited)
 I'm surprised Liz didn't get offered the job. (= Liz wasn't offered the job)

You can use get only when things happen. For example, you cannot use get in the following sentences:

- Jill is liked by everybody. (not gets liked – this is not a 'happening')
- He was a mystery man. Very little was known about him. (not got known)

We use get mainly in informal spoken English. You can use be in all situations.

We also use get in the following expressions (which are not passive in meaning):
 get married, get divorced get lost (= not know where you are)
 get dressed (= put on your clothes) get changed (= change your clothes)

44.1 Write these sentences in another way, beginning in the way shown.

- 1 They didn't give me the information I needed.
 I wasn't given the information I needed.
- 2 They asked me some difficult questions at the interview.
 I
- 3 Linda's colleagues gave her a present when she retired.
 Linda
- 4 Nobody told me about the meeting.
 I wasn't
- 5 How much will they pay you for your work?
 How much will you
- 6 I think they should have offered Tom the job.
 I think Tom
- 7 Has anybody shown you what to do?
 Have you

44.2 Complete the sentences using being + the following (in the correct form):

give invite ~~keep~~ knock down stick treat

- 1 Steve hates being kept waiting.
- 2 We went to the party without
- 3 I like giving presents and I also like them.
- 4 It's a busy road and I don't like crossing it. I'm afraid of
- 5 I'm an adult. I don't like like a child.
- 6 You can't do anything about in a traffic jam.

44.3 When were they born? Choose five of these people and write a sentence for each. (Two of them were born in the same year.)

Beethoven	Galileo	Elvis Presley	1452	1869	1929
Agatha Christie	Mahatma Gandhi	Leonardo da Vinci	1564	1890	1935
Walt Disney	Martin Luther King	William Shakespeare	1770	1904	

- 1 Walt Disney was born in 1901.
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 And you? I

44.4 Complete the sentences using get/got + the following verbs (in the correct form):

ask damage ~~hurt~~ pay steal sting stop use

- 1 There was a fight at the party, but nobody got hurt.
- 2 Alex by a bee while he was sitting in the garden.
- 3 These tennis courts don't very often. Not many people want to play.
- 4 I used to have a bicycle, but it a few months ago.
- 5 Rachel works hard but doesn't very much.
- 6 Last night I by the police as I was driving home. One of the lights on my car wasn't working.
- 7 Please pack these things very carefully. I don't want them to
- 8 People often want to know what my job is. I often that question.

It is said that ... He is said to ... He is supposed to ...

A Study this example situation:



Henry is very old. Nobody knows exactly how old he is, but:

It is said that **he** is 108 years old.

or **He** is said to be 108 years old.

Both these sentences mean: 'People say that he is 108 years old.'

You can use these structures with a number of other verbs, especially:
alleged believed considered expected known reported thought understood

Compare the two structures:

- Cathy works very hard.
 It is said that she works 16 hours a day. or She is said to work 16 hours a day.
- The police are looking for a missing boy.
 It is believed that the boy is wearing a white pullover and blue jeans. or The boy is believed to be wearing a white pullover and blue jeans.
- The strike started three weeks ago.
 It is expected that it will end soon. or The strike is expected to end soon.
- A friend of mine has been arrested.
 It is alleged that he hit a policeman. or He is alleged to have hit a policeman.
- The two houses belong to the same family.
 It is said that there is a secret tunnel between them. or There is said to be a secret tunnel between them.

These structures are often used in news reports. For example, in a report about an accident:

- It is reported that two people were injured in the explosion. or Two people are reported to have been injured in the explosion.

B (Be) supposed to

Sometimes (it is) supposed to ... = (it is) said to ... :
 I want to see that film. It's supposed to be good. (= it is said to be good)
 Mark is supposed to have hit a policeman, but I don't believe it.

But sometimes supposed to has a different meaning. We use supposed to to say what is intended, arranged or expected. Often this is different from the real situation:

- The plan is supposed to be a secret, but everybody seems to know about it. (= the plan is intended to be a secret)
- What are you doing at work? You're supposed to be on holiday. (= you arranged to be on holiday)
- Our guests were supposed to come at 7.30, but they were late.
- Jane was supposed to phone me last night, but she didn't.
- I'd better hurry. I'm supposed to be meeting Chris in ten minutes.

You're not supposed to do something = it is not allowed or advisable:

- You're not supposed to park your car here. It's private parking only.
- Jeff is much better after his illness, but he's still not supposed to do any heavy work.

45.1 Write these sentences in another way, beginning as shown. Use the underlined word each time.

- 1 It is expected that the strike will end soon. The strike is expected to end soon.
- 2 It is expected that the weather will be good tomorrow. The weather is
- 3 It is believed that the thieves got in through a window in the roof. The thieves
- 4 It is reported that many people are homeless after the floods. Many people
- 5 It is thought that the prisoner escaped by climbing over a wall. The prisoner
- 6 It is alleged that the man was driving at 110 miles an hour. The man
- 7 It is reported that the building has been badly damaged by the fire. The building
- 8 a It is said that the company is losing a lot of money. The company
- b It is believed that the company lost a lot of money last year. The company
- c It is expected that the company will make a loss this year. The company

45.2 There are a lot of rumours about Alan. Here are some of the things people say about him:

- 1 Alan speaks ten languages.
- 2 He knows a lot of famous people.
- 3 He is very rich.
- 4 He has twelve children.
- 5 He was an actor when he was younger.



Alan

Nobody is sure whether these things are true. Write sentences about Alan using supposed to.

- 1 Alan is supposed to speak ten languages.
- 2 He
- 3
- 4
- 5

45.3 Complete the sentences using supposed to be + the following:

on a diet a flower my friend a joke ~~a secret~~ working

- 1 Everybody seems to know about the plan, but it is supposed to be a secret.
- 2 You shouldn't criticise me all the time. You
- 3 I shouldn't be eating this cake really. I
- 4 I'm sorry for what I said. I was trying to be funny. It
- 5 What's this drawing? Is it a tree? Or maybe it
- 6 You shouldn't be reading the paper now. You

45.4 Write sentences with supposed to + the following verbs:

arrive block ~~park~~ phone start

Use the negative (not supposed to) where necessary.

- 1 You 're not supposed to park here. It's private parking only.
- 2 We work at 8.15, but we rarely do anything before 8.30.
- 3 Oh, I Helen, but I completely forgot.
- 4 This door is a fire exit. You it.
- 5 My train at 11.30, but it was an hour late.