

University of Anbar
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Year: First

Course: English Language

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THE PASSIVE VOICE

What is the PASSIVE VOICE?

The grammatical structure

Transforming from the active to the passive

Why do we use the passive voice?



What is the **PASSIVE VOICE**?

Active: *The boy plays the piano.*

Passive: *The piano is played by the boy.*

Active: *The lifeguard saved a man.*

Passive: *A man was saved by the lifeguard.*

What is voice?

➤ Voice refers to the form of a verb that indicates whether the subject performs the action or is the receiver of the action.

➤ **ACTIVE VOICE:** refers to the “WHO” or “WHAT” that is doing the action of the verb in a sentence.

It means the subject is **DOING/ PERFORMING** the action

➡ **ACTIVE** subject

➤ **PASSIVE VOICE:** means the subject is **RECEIVING** the action of the verb

➡ **PASSIVE** subject

The Grammatical Structure

Passive: **BE + past participle**

BE

am / are / is

was / were

been

being

Past participle

Verb #3

eat – ate – eaten

play – played – played

PASSIVE VOICE

Present Simple Passive	am/ is/ are + past participle
Present Continuous Passive	am/ is/ are + being + past participle
Past Simple Passive	was/ were + past participle
Past Continuous Passive	was/ were + being + past participle
Present Perfect Passive	has/ have + been + past participle
Past Perfect Passive	had + been + past participle

EXAMPLES

Active

- ▶ *Everybody loves chocolate.*
- ▶ *The children ate the cookies.*
- ▶ *The teacher explained the lesson to the students.*
- ▶ *I am eating an apple right now.*
- ▶ *I have eaten breakfast already.*

Passive

- ▶ *Chocolate **is loved** by everybody.*
- ▶ *The cookies **were eaten** by the children.*
- ▶ *The lesson **was explained** to the students by the teacher.*
- ▶ *An apple **is being eaten** by me right now.*
- ▶ *Breakfast **has already been eaten** by me.*

Infinitive: (to) be + past participle

➤ **Active:** (to) do/clean/see etc.

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

➤ **Examples:**

1. **Active:** *Somebody **will clean** this room later.*

Passive: *This room **will be cleaned** later.*

2. **Active:** *We **need to solve** this problem.*

Passive: *This problem **needs to be solved**.*

3. **Active:** *They **want someone to help** them.*

Passive: *They **want to be helped**.*

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- *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.*

Passives: Verbs with Two Objects

- ▶ Some verbs can have two objects. For example, give:

*My grandfather gave **me** **this watch**.*

- ▶ It is possible to make two passive sentences:

***I was given** this watch (by my grandfather).*

*This watch **was given** to me (by my grandfather).*

- ▶ Other verbs which can have two objects are: ask/ offer/ pay/ show/ tell

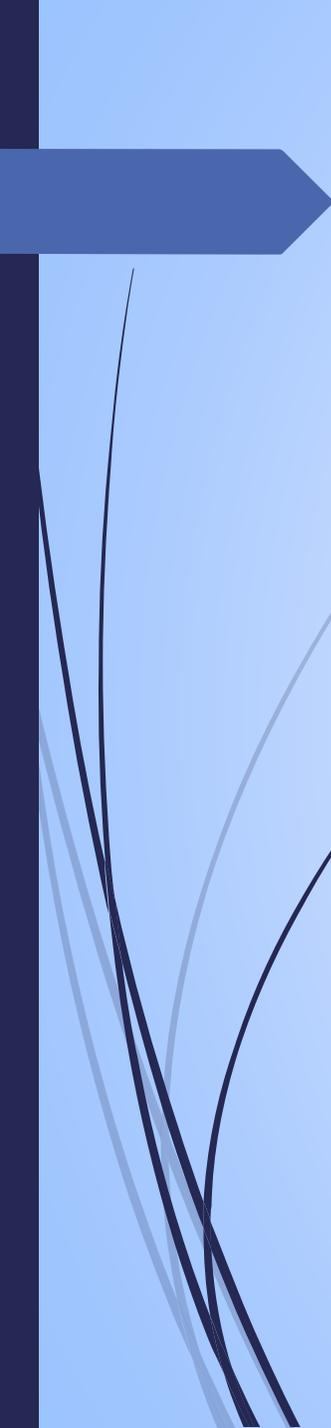
- ▶ When we use these verbs in the passive, most often we begin with the person:

➤ *I've been offered the job, but I don't think I want it. (= somebody has offered me the job)*

➤ *You will be given plenty of time to decide. (= we will give you plenty of time)*

➤ *I didn't see the original document, but I was shown a copy. (= somebody showed me a copy)*

➤ *Tim has an easy job – he's paid a lot of money to do very little. (= somebody pays him a lot)*



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.*

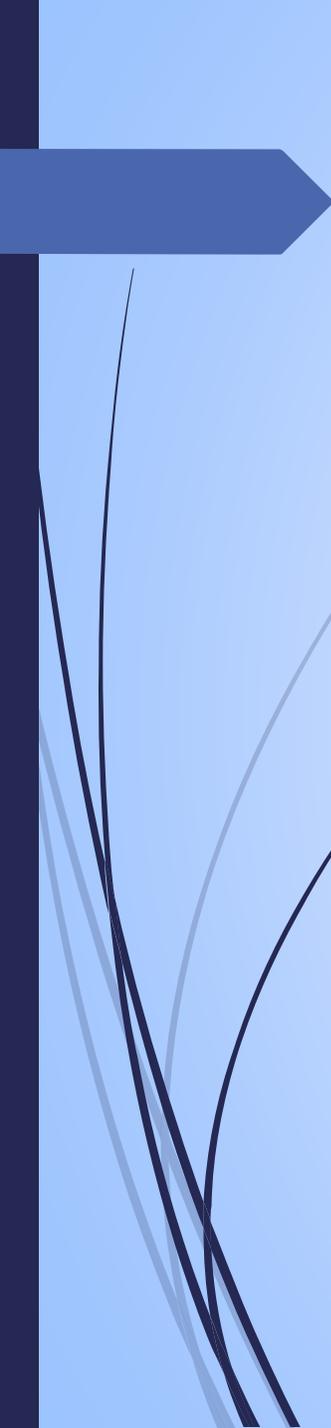
Why do we use the passive voice?

- ▶ **Emphasize the Action:** When the action is more important or interesting than the person who does the action.
 - *One million pounds **were donated** to the children's hospital.*
(The donation is more important than who donated.)
- ▶ **Unknown or Unimportant Actor:** The person who does the action is not known, or not important.
 - *This beautiful bridge **was built** in 1974.*
(The builder is not specified or relevant here.)
- ▶ **Obvious Actor:** The person doing the action is obvious.
 - *Bill **was arrested** last night.*
(It's obvious who performed the action — likely the police!)



Practice: Make passive sentences.

- ▶ **He does not write a letter.**
- ▶ **You have broken the cup.**
- ▶ **Was she washing a shirt?**
- ▶ **They will start a business.**
- ▶ **Had they won the competition?**
- ▶ **She decorated the walls.**
- ▶ **You are disturbing me.**
- ▶ **The teacher gave the students a test.**

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- **How do you use this word?**
 - **People warned us not to go out alone.**
 - **They are catching many animals in the wild.**
 - **Someone has promised all the office workers a week's holiday.**
 - **Somebody sent my sister application forms.**
 - **Where did they leave their bags?**
 - **They hadn't cooked the vegetables too long.**
 - **The singer sang the song.**

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