

Passive 1 *a lot of money is spent*

When we make an active sentence passive, the object becomes the subject. We do this when we want to put information at the beginning of the sentence because it is more important.

A lot of money is spent in London by tourists. (A lot of money is important)

Tourists spend a lot of money in London. (Tourists is important).

We use the passive more in writing and in formal speech.

Passive forms

● Present simple

<i>is started</i>	<i>are started</i>	(regular)
<i>is eaten</i>	<i>are eaten</i>	(irregular)

Active

Archaeologists often discover ancient coins.

Passive

*Ancient coins **are** often **discovered** by archaeologists.*

● will

<i>will be started</i>	(regular)
<i>will be eaten</i>	(irregular)

Active

They will finish the new road next year.

Passive

*The new road **will be finished** next year.*

● Present perfect

<i>has been started</i>	<i>have been started</i>	(regular)
<i>has been eaten</i>	<i>have been eaten</i>	(irregular)

Active

Your cat has eaten my pet mouse!

Passive

*My pet mouse **has been eaten** by your cat!*

● Past simple

<i>was started</i>	<i>were started</i>	(regular)
<i>was eaten</i>	<i>were eaten</i>	(irregular)

Active

The whole class wrote the play.

Passive

*The play **was written** by the whole class.*

1 Underline the correct words in each sentence.

- 1 Last year more than a million cars were stolen / are stolen.
- 2 Helen *has decided* / *has been decided* to visit China.
- 3 America *visited* / *was visited* by the Vikings.
- 4 The police *have not found* / *have not been found* the missing dog.
- 5 More interesting facts *are discovered* / *are discover* every year.
- 6 The basketball team *is chosen* / *chooses* by the captain.
- 7 The next meeting *will hold* / *will be held* on 14 December.

2 Complete each sentence in the passive.

- 1 The police arrested fifteen people.
Fifteen people were arrested by the police.
- 2 They have found little Jimmy safe and well.
Little Jimmy safe and well.
- 3 We plant hundreds of trees every year.
Hundreds of trees every year.
- 4 We will sell most tickets on the day of the match.
Most tickets on the day of the match.
- 5 They took the injured people to hospital.
The injured people to hospital.
- 6 They have discovered a new planet.
A new planet

3 Rewrite each sentence in the passive. Do not change the meaning.

- 1 They built the bridge in 2006.
The bridge was built in 2006.
- 2 A dog has eaten my sandwich!
.....
- 3 They'll deliver the letter tomorrow.
.....
- 4 They have cancelled our train.
.....
- 5 One of the students broke a window in the classroom.
.....
- 6 People eat millions of bars of chocolate every day!
.....

Passive 2: agent *Peter was kidnapped by aliens.*

by + agent

This tells us who does the action.

*Peter was kidnapped **by aliens** from another galaxy.*

In this sentence; who did it = aliens.

with + agent

This tells us what was used to do the action.

*The door was opened **with a special key**.*

In this sentence; what was used = a special key.

Without an agent

An agent is not always necessary. The agent may be unknown, not important or obvious, or we may want to be impersonal and not say who did the action.

- **Agent unknown**

The window was broken last night.

We do not know who broke it.

- **Agent not important**

The castle was built in the 18th century.

We are interested in the date, but not in the builder.

- **Agent obvious**

The man was arrested and taken to prison.

It is obvious that he was arrested by the police.

*He was arrested **by a tall, thin policeman with red hair**.*

In this case, the policeman who arrested him is interesting.

- **Impersonal sentence**

The match has been cancelled.

The person or people who decided to cancel the match are not named.

born is always passive

*Jim **was born** in Australia.*

- A verb may be used in the passive in one language, but not in another. Check in a dictionary.



1 Rewrite each sentence using *with* or *by*. Do not change the meaning.

- 1 A friend gave Tina a lift to school.
Tina was given a lift to school by a friend.....
- 2 Tom Smooth will play the part of Hamlet.
The part of Hamlet
- 3 They used a screwdriver to open the window.
The window
- 4 A team of archaeologists has found an ancient city.
An ancient city
- 5 A ball broke the classroom window.
The classroom window
- 6 A Japanese millionaire bought the painting.
The painting
- 7 Howard Carter discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922.
The tomb
- 8 Millions of people enjoy Susan's books.
Susan's books
- 9 Heavy traffic causes a lot of pollution.
A lot of pollution

2 Change each sentence to the passive. Do not use the words underlined.

- 1 Workers build thousands of new houses every year.
Thousands of new homes are built every year.....
- 2 The two teams will play the match on Sunday.
.....
- 3 Nowadays people cut down many trees for no reason.
.....
- 4 The police asked Jim to go to the police station.
.....
- 5 Someone has stolen my bike.
.....
- 6 People delivered our new washing-machine yesterday.
.....
- 7 Three masked men kidnapped the bank manager.
.....
- 8 A firm of builders will rebuild the museum next year.
.....