

PASSIVE VOICE.-

When talking about the passive voice we must take into account five main points:

- Uses
- Form
- Verbs with two objects
- Modals in the passive
- Have/ get something done in the passive
- Complex structures in the passive

1.- USES.-

We use an **active** verb to say **what the subject does**.

*My grandfather was a builder. He built this house in 1930.
It's a big company. It employs two hundred people.*

We use a **passive** verb to say **what happens to the subject**. In most passive sentences we have no interest in who or what performs the action. We are interested in the action itself, who or what is affected by the action.

*This house is quite old. It was built in 1930.
Two hundred people are employed by the company.*

When we decide to use the **passive voice**, **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 complement is called the agent).

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

2.- FORM.-

Here there are some examples of passive voice in different tenses.

Many accidents **are caused** by careless driving. (present tense)

We **were woken up** by a loud noise during the night. (past tense)

Have you heard the news? The President **has been shot!** (present perfect)

The vegetables didn't taste very good. They **had been cooked** for too long.
(past perfect)

There's somebody walking behind us. I think we **are being followed**. (present continuous)

There was somebody walking behind us. We **were being followed**. (past continuous)

The situation is serious. Something **must be done** before it's too late. (modals)

A mystery is something that **can't be explained**. (modals)

3.- VERBS WITH TWO OBJECTS.-

There are some verbs which can have two objects. For example, **give, send, offer, tell, ask, promise, show, teach, pay, bring, buy, cost, get, leave, lend, make, order, owe, pass, read, refuse, sing, take, wish write...**

We gave the police the information = We gave the information TO the police.

The police : person or indirect object / **The information** : thing or direct object.

So it is possible to make two passive sentences:

- **With the indirect object first**, as the subject: The police were given the information. This is the most common one, above all in spoken English.
- **Or with the direct object first**: The information was given to the police. Here it is necessary the preposition TO before the person or indirect object (the police).

Where possible rewrite the following sentences in two different ways.

- The boss offered him an excellent job.
- We will give you plenty of time to complete the test.
- Has anybody shown you the new fitness machine in the gym?
- The executives paid the staff more than 200 euros to do the cleaning.
- They gave an award to an unknown actress.
- The police showed the victim a picture of the suspect.
- People used to sell the tourists fake antiques.
- They didn't guarantee every participant a free lunch.
- They reported the incident to the police.
- They promised us full compensation if the scheme fell through.
- The referee declared the boxing match a draw.

4.- MODALS IN THE PASSIVE.

CAN – COULD (poder, saber)

SHOULD (debería)

WOULD

MAY – MIGHT (poder – posibilidad)

MUST- MUSTN'T (deber)

NEED – NEEDN'T (necesitar, tener que, ausencia de obligación)

WILL – SHALL

Here there are some examples:

You can convert this sofa into a bed – This sofa can be converted into a bed.

The structure is the following: SUBJECT (the object in the active) + MODAL + BE + PAST PARTICIPLE.

Students shouldn't copy down the English exercises

The English exercises
Subject

SHOULDN'T
modal

BE
verb be

COPIED
p. participle

by students.
agent

- e) She's going to the dentist to fix her teeth.

6.- COMPLEX STRUCTURES IN THE PASSIVE.-

It is used when we don't know the doer of the action: Se dice, se cree, se piensa, se comenta...The most common verbs are: say, think, believe, know, expect, suppose, report...There are two ways of forming this passive:

- ❖ With the introductory subject **IT+ VERB TO BE + PAST PARTICIPLE + (THAT) ...**As in the example: *People say that he is very ill => It is said that he is very ill/ It is believed that he is .../ It is thought that he is ...*

- ❖ **With the subject of the main sentence + VERB TO BE + PAST PARTICIPLE + TO+ INFINITIVE...**For instance, *He is said to be very ill.*

Examples:

Experts believe that this house dates back to 12th century.

- ❑ **It is believed that** this house dates back to 12th century.
- ❑ **This house is believed to** date back to 12th century.

They think this sword belonged to King Arthur.

- ❑ **It is thought that** this sword belonged to King Arthur.
- ❑ **This sword is thought to** have belonged to King Arthur.

People think that the euro will increase its value next year.

- ❑ **It is thought that** the euro will increase its value next year.
- ❑ **The euro is thought to** increase its value next year.

The government expect that the strike will end soon.

- ❑ **It is expected that** the strike will end soon.
- ❑ **The strike is expected to** end soon.

After reading through all this information rewrite the following sentences in the passive voice.

- The police has arrested my neighbour.
- The police has fined Sara for careless driving.
- The town hall office will send you a reminder of the document.
- The 1st local governor built this stadium in 1982.
- We claim justice for the damaged people.
- You have to press the bottom down to open the mechanism.
- Citizens cannot park their cars on the other side of the road.
- The referee will penalise both players because of foul play.
- You must not open doors when recording.
- The American population might support Bush again if they are promised national security.
- I'm going to the optician to test my eyes.
- I'll ask someone to paint my portrait.
- The children smashed the school doors and twisted their wrists.
- People expect that salaries will increase in January.
- Police reported that criminals knocked over a woman when running away.
- Doctors believe that the illness was caused by an attacking virus.
- People say that the new guests are millionaires.
- People thought that she died in a plane crash.
- In the medieval age scientists believed that the earth was the centre of the universe.

