


Passive (1) (**is done / was done**)

A

Study this example:



This house **was built** in 1930.

'Was built' is *passive*. Compare active and passive:

Somebody **built** this house in 1930. (*active*)
subject object

This house **was built** in 1930. (*passive*)
subject

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*:

- This house is quite old. **It was built** in 1930.
- **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/have been etc.) + the past participle (done/cleaned/seen etc.)**:

(be) done (be) cleaned (be) seen (be) damaged (be) built etc.

For irregular past participles (done/known/seen 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**?

EXERCISES

Complete the sentences using one of these verbs in the correct form:

cause damage hold include invite make overtake show
translate write

- 1 Many accidents are caused by dangerous driving.
- 2 Cheese from milk.
- 3 The roof of the building in a storm a few days ago.
- 4 There's no need to leave a tip. Service in the bill.
- 5 You to the wedding. Why didn't you go?
- 6 A cinema is a place where films
- 7 In the United States, elections for President every four years.
- 8 Originally the book in Spanish and a few years ago it
..... into English.
- 9 We were driving along quite fast but we by lots of other cars.

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

- 1 Ask about the telephone. (when/invent?) When was the telephone invented?
- 2 Ask about glass. (how/make?) How
- 3 Ask about Australia. (when/discover?)
- 4 Ask about silver. (what/use for?)
- 5 Ask about television. (when/invent?)

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

- 1 It's a big factory. Five hundred people are employed (employ) there.
- 2 Water (cover) most of the Earth's surface.
- 3 Most of the Earth's surface (cover) by water.
- 4 The park gates (lock) at 6.30 p.m. every evening.
- 5 The letter (post) a week ago and it (arrive) yesterday.
- 6 The boat (sink) quickly but fortunately everybody
..... (rescue).
- 7 Ron's parents (die) when he was very young. He and his sister
..... (bring) up by their grandparents.
- 8 I was born in London but I (grow) up in the north of England.
- 9 While I was on holiday, my camera (steal) from my hotel room.
- 10 While I was on holiday, my camera (disappear) from my hotel room.
- 11 Why (Sue/resign) from her job? Didn't she enjoy it?
- 12 Why (Bill/sack) from his job? What did he do wrong?
- 13 The company is not independent. It (own) by a much larger company.
- 14 I saw an accident last night. Somebody (call) an ambulance but
nobody (injure) so the ambulance (not/need).
- 15 Where (these photographs/take)? In London?
..... (you/take) them?

Rewrite these sentences. Instead of using 'somebody/they/people' etc. write a passive sentence.

- 1 Somebody cleans the room every day. The room is cleaned every day.
- 2 They cancelled all flights because of fog. All
- 3 People don't use this road very often.
- 4 Somebody accused me of stealing money. I
- 5 How do people learn languages? How
- 6 People advised us not to go out alone.

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

Study the following active and passive forms:

A

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: have done/cleaned/seen etc.

Somebody should have cleaned the room.

passive: 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)

The room looks nice. Somebody has cleaned it.

passive: have/has been (done)

The room looks nice. It has been cleaned.

- Have you heard the news? The President has been shot!
- 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)

The room looked nice. Somebody had cleaned it.

passive: had been (done)

The room looked nice. It had been cleaned.

- The vegetables didn't taste very good. They had been cooked for 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, madam?' '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.

EXERCISES

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

If something is

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

2.2 Complete these sentences with one of the following verbs (in the correct form):

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

Sometimes you need have ('might have', 'could have' etc.).

- The situation is serious. Something must ~~be done~~ before it's too late.
- I haven't received the letter. It might ~~have been sent~~ to the wrong address.
- A decision will not until the next meeting.
- I told the hotel receptionist that I wanted to at 6.30 the next morning.
- Do you think that less money should on armaments?
- This road is in very bad condition. It should a long time ago.
- The injured man couldn't walk and had to
- It's not certain how the fire started but it might by an electrical fault.

2.3 Rewrite these sentences. Instead of using 'somebody' or 'they', write a passive sentence.

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

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

(This exercise also includes the past simple – see Unit 41C.)

- There's somebody behind us. (I think / we / follow) ~~I think we're being followed~~...
- This room looks different. (you / paint?) ~~Have you painted it?~~...
- My car has disappeared. (it / steal!) It
- My umbrella has disappeared. (somebody / take) Somebody
- Tom gets a higher salary now. (he / promote)
- Ann can't use her office at the moment. (it / redecorate)
- The photocopier broke down yesterday, but now it's OK. (it / work / again; it / repair)
.....
- The police have found the people they were looking for. (two people / arrest / last night)
.....
- A tree was lying across the road. (it / blow down / in the storm)
.....
- The man next door disappeared six months ago. (nobody / see / since then)
.....
- I was mugged on my way home a few nights ago. (you / ever / mug?)
.....

Passive (3)

A

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 simple*
- but* ● How many babies are **born** every day? *present simple*

B

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

- We gave the police the information. (= We 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** £200 to do the work. (= somebody paid the men £200)

C

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 given** a toy drum on my fifth birthday. (= I remember somebody giving me a toy drum...)
- Mr Miller hates **being kept** waiting. (= he hates people keeping him waiting)
- We managed to climb over the wall without **being seen**. (= ...without anybody seeing us)

D

Get

Sometimes 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 Ann **didn't get offered** the job. (...Ann **wasn't offered** the job)

You can use **get** to say that something happens to somebody or something, especially if this is unplanned or unexpected:

- Our dog **got run over** by a car.

You can use **get** only when things happen or change. For example, you cannot use **get** in these sentences:

- Jill **is liked** by everybody. (*not* 'gets liked' – this is not a 'happening')
- He was a mystery man. Nothing **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 dressed (= put on your clothes) get changed (= change your clothes)

EXERCISES

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	1891	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

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

- 1 They didn't give me the money. I ~~wasn't given the money~~...
- 2 They asked me some difficult questions at the interview.
I
- 3 Janet's colleagues gave her a present when she retired.
Janet
- 4 Nobody told me that George was ill.
I wasn't
- 5 How much will they pay you?
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

Complete the sentences using being + one of these verbs:

ask attack give invite ~~keep~~ pay

- 1 Mr Miller doesn't like ~~being kept~~... waiting.
- 2 They went to the party without
- 3 Most people like presents.
- 4 It's a dangerous city. People won't go out after dark because they are afraid of
- 5 I don't like stupid questions.
- 6 Few people are prepared to work without

Complete the sentences using get/got + one of these verbs (in the correct form):

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

- 1 There was a fight at the party but nobody ~~got hurt~~...
- 2 Ted by a bee while he was sitting in the garden.
- 3 How did that window?
- 4 These tennis courts don't very often. Not many people want to play.
- 5 I used to have a bicycle but it
- 6 Last night I by the police as I was driving home.
- 7 How much did you last month?
- 8 Please pack these things very carefully. I don't want them to
- 9 People often want to know what my job is. I often that question.

It is said that... He is said to... (be) 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:

thought believed considered reported known expected alleged 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 kicked a policeman. | or | He is alleged to have kicked a policeman. |
| ● Those 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...:

- Let's go and see that film. It's supposed to be very good. (= it is said to be very good)
- 'Why was he arrested?' 'He's supposed to have kicked a policeman.' (= he is said to have kicked a policeman)

But sometimes supposed to has a different meaning. 'Something is supposed to happen' = it is planned, arranged or expected. Often this is different from what *really* happens:

- I'd better hurry. It's nearly 8 o'clock and I'm supposed to be meeting Ann at 8.15. (= I have arranged to meet Ann, I said I would meet her)
- The train was supposed to arrive at 11.30 but it was an hour late. (= the train was expected to arrive at 11.30 according to the timetable)
- You were supposed to clean the windows. Why didn't you do it?

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

- You're not supposed to park your car here. It's private parking only.
- Mr Bond is much better after his illness but he's still not supposed to do any heavy work. (= his doctors have advised him not to...)

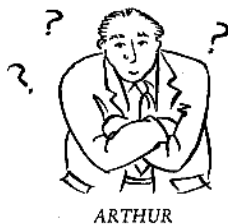
EXERCISES

4.1 Write these sentences in another way, beginning as shown. Use the underlined word in your sentence.

- 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 the kitchen window.
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 drove through the town at 90 miles an hour.
The man is
- 7 It is reported that the building has been badly damaged by 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 lose money this year.
The company

4.2 People say a lot of things about Arthur. For example:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Arthur eats spiders. | 4 He has 12 children. |
| 2 He is very rich. | 5 He robbed a bank a long time ago. |
| 3 He writes poetry. | |



ARTHUR

Nobody knows for sure whether these things are true or not. Write sentences about Arthur using (be) supposed to.

- 1 ...Arthur is supposed to eat spiders....
- 2 He
- 3
- 4
- 5

4.3 Now you have to use (be) supposed to with its other meaning. In each example what happens is different from what is supposed to happen. Use (be) supposed to + one of these verbs:

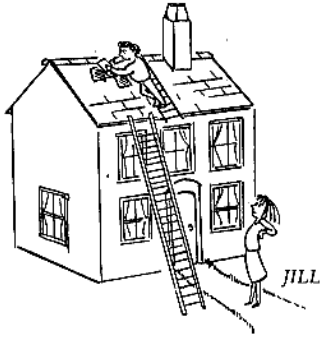
arrive be block come park phone start

Some of the sentences are negative (like the first example).

- 1 You're **not supposed to park**... here. It's private parking only.
- 2 The train **was supposed to arrive**.. at 11.30, but it was an hour late.
- 3 What are the children doing at home? They at school at this time.
- 4 We work at 8.15, but we rarely do anything before 8.30.
- 5 This door is a fire exit. You it.
- 6 Oh dear! I Ann but I completely forgot.
- 7 They arrived very early - at 2 o'clock. They until 3.30.

Have something done

A Study this example situation:



The roof of Jill's house was damaged in a storm, so she arranged for somebody to repair it. Yesterday a workman came and did the job.

Jill **had the roof repaired** yesterday.

This means: Jill arranged for somebody else to repair the roof. She didn't repair it herself.

We use **have something done** to say that we arrange for somebody else to do something for us. Compare:

- Jill **repaired** the roof. (= she repaired it herself)
- Jill **had the roof repaired**. (= she arranged for somebody else to repair it)

Study these sentences:

- Did Ann make the dress herself or **did she have it made**?
- 'Are you going to repair the car yourself?' 'No, I'm going to **have it repaired**.'

Be careful with word order. The *past participle* (repaired/cut etc.) is after the *object* (the roof / your hair etc.):

	have	+	object	+	past participle	
Jill	had		the roof		repaired	yesterday.
Where	did you have		your hair		cut?	
Your hair looks nice.	Have you had		it		cut?	
Julia	has just had		central heating		installed	in her house.
We	are having		the house		painted	at the moment.
How often	do you have		your car		serviced?	
I think you should	have		that coat		cleaned	soon.
I don't like	having		my photograph		taken.	

B You can also say 'get something done' instead of 'have something done' (mainly in informal spoken English):

- When are you going to **get the roof repaired**? (= have the roof repaired)
- I think you should **get your hair cut**.

C Sometimes **have something done** has a different meaning. For example:

- Jill and Eric **had all their money stolen** while they were on holiday.





Of course this does *not* mean that they *arranged* for somebody to steal their money. 'They **had all their money stolen**' means only: 'All their money was stolen from them.'

With this meaning, we use **have something done** to say that something happens to somebody or their belongings. Usually what happens is not nice:

- George **had his nose broken** in a fight.
- Have you ever **had your passport stolen**?

EXERCISES

1 Tick (✓) the correct sentence, (a) or (b), for each picture.

<p>1</p>  <p>SARAH</p> <p>a Sarah is cutting her hair. b Sarah is having her hair cut.</p>	<p>2</p>  <p>BILL</p> <p>a Bill is cutting his hair. b Bill is having his hair cut.</p>	<p>3</p>  <p>JOHN</p> <p>a John is cleaning his shoes. b John is having his shoes cleaned.</p>	<p>4</p>  <p>SUE</p> <p>a Sue is taking a photograph. b Sue is having her photograph taken.</p>
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2 Why did you do these things? Answer using 'have something done'. Use one of these verbs:

clean cut repair service

- Why did you take your car to the garage? ...To have it serviced...
- Why did you take your jacket to the cleaner's? To
- Why did you take your watch to the jeweller's?
- Why did you go to the hairdresser?

3 Write sentences in the way shown.

- Jill didn't repair the roof herself. She ...had it repaired...
- I didn't cut my hair myself. I
- They didn't paint the house themselves. They
- Sue didn't make the curtains herself.

4 Use the words in brackets to complete the sentences. Use the structure 'have something done'.

- We ...are having the house painted... (the house / paint) at the moment.
- I lost my key. I'll have to (another key / make).
- When was the last time you (your hair / cut)?
- You look different. (you / your hair / cut)?
- (you / a newspaper / deliver) to your house or do you go to the shop to buy one?
- A: What are those workmen doing in your garden?
B: Oh, we (a swimming pool / build).
- A: Can I see the photographs you took when you were on holiday?
B: I'm afraid I (not / the film / develop) yet.
- This coat is dirty. I must (it / clean).
- If you want to wear earrings, why don't you (your ears / pierce)?

5 Now you have to use 'have something done' with its second meaning (see Section C).

- George's nose was broken in a fight.
What happened to George? ...He had his nose broken in a fight...
- Sarah's bag was stolen on a train.
What happened to Sarah? She
- Fred's hat was blown off in the wind.
What happened to Fred?
- Diane's passport was taken away from her by the police.
What happened to Diane?