

We form the passive with the verb to be and the past participle of the main verb. to be + past participle (pp)

present simple - am / is / are + pp

My car is serviced twice a year.

present continuous - am / is / are being + pp

My car is being serviced now.

past simple - was / were + pp

My car was being serviced when I went to the garage.

present perfect simple - have / has been + pp

My car has already been serviced.

past perfect simple - had been + pp

My car had been serviced by two o'clock.

future simple - will be + pp

My car will be serviced tomorrow.

future perfect simple - will have been + pp

My car will have been serviced by Monday.

present infinitive - (to) be + pp

My car needs to be serviced soon.

perfect infinitive - (to) have been + pp

My car should have been serviced last month.

- ing form - being + pp

I insist on my car being serviced today.

modals - modal + be + pp

My car must be serviced before the trip.

The present perfect continuous, the future continuous, the past perfect continuous and the future perfect continuous are not normally used in the passive.

We can use the verb to get instead of the verb to be in everyday speech when we talk about things that happen by accident or unexpectedly.

Mary got run over by a car while she was crossing the street. (Mary was run over...)

The passive is used:

when the person who carries out the action is unknown, unimportant or obvious from the context.

The cows are milked once a day. (It is obvious that the farmer milks the cows.)

when the action itself is more important than the person who carries it out, as in news headlines, newspaper articles, formal notices, instructions, advertisements etc.

Two teenagers were seriously injured in a car accident last night.

when we want to make statements more polite.

My new blouse is ruined. (more polite than saying: You've ruined my new blouse.)

Note: The passive is used more often in written English than in spoken English.

Changing from active into passive

To change a sentence from the active into the passive:

- The object of the active sentence becomes the subject in the passive sentence.
- The active verb remains in the same tense, but changes into a passive form.
- The subject of the active sentence becomes the agent, and is either introduced with the preposition by or omitted.

Only transitive verbs (verbs followed by an object) can be changed into the passive.

active: Peter feeds the cows.

passive: The cows are fed by Peter.

present simple

active - She writes the reports.

passive - The reports are written.

present continuous

active - She is writing the reports.

passive - The reports are being

past simple

active- She wrote the reports.

passive- The reports were written.

past continuous

active- She was writing the reports.

passive- The reports were being written.

present perfect simple

active- She has written the reports.

passive- The reports have been written.

past perfect simple

active- She had written the reports.

passive- The reports had been written.

future simple

active- She will write the reports.

passive- The reports will be written.

future perfect simple

active- She will have written the reports.

passive- The reports will have been written.

infinitive

active- She has to write the reports.

passive- The reports have to be written.

modals

active- She may write the reports.

passive- The reports may be written.

We use by + agent to say who or what carries out the action. We use with + instrument / material / ingredient to say what the agent used.

A kite was made by John. It was made with paper, paint and string.

The agent is often omitted in the passive sentence when the subject of the active sentence is one of the following words: people, one, someone/ somebody, they, he, etc.

active: People eat a lot of junk food nowadays.

passive: A lot of junk food is eaten nowadays.

Object pronouns (me, you, him etc) become subject pronouns (I, you, he, etc) in the passive.

active: The rescued me. passive: I was rescued.

With verbs which take two objects such as bring, tell, send, show, teach, promise, buy, throw, write, award, hand, sell, owe, grant, allow, feed, pass, post, read, take, offer, give, pay and lend, we can make two different passive sentences. However, it is more usual for passive sentences to begin with the person.

active: Jessica showed Rod some photos.

passive: Some photos were shown to Rod by Jessica. / Some photos were shown to rod by Jessica.

When the verb of the active sentence is followed by a preposition, the preposition is kept in the passive sentence as well.

active: Jane looks after the baby.

passive: The baby is looked after by Jane.

When we want to find out who or what did something, then the passive question form is as follows: Who/ What ..by?

Who was the camera invented by?

What was the explosion caused by?

The verbs think, believe, say, report, know, expect, consider, understand, etc. are used in the following passive patterns in personal and impersonal constructions.

active: People say that he has lost his job.

passive: It is said (that) he has lost his job. (impersonal construction)

He is said to have lost his job. (personal construction)

active: People know that she works hard.

passive: It is known (that) she works hard. / She is known to work hard.

Passive voice - personal and impersonal structure

1. It is said that + osoba + Present Simple / Future Simple

Podmiot + is said to + bezokolicznik.

It is said that Marek swims fast. / It is said that Marek will win.

Marek is said to swim fast. / Marek is said to win.

2. It is said that + osoba + Present Continuous

Podmiot + is said to + BE + CZASOWNIK +ING

It is said that Marek is redecorating his house.

Marek is said to BE REDECORATING his house.

3. It is said that + osoba + Past Simple / Present Perfect Simple

Podmiot + is said to + HAVE + 3 FORMA CZASOWNIKA

It is said that Marek was seriously ill. / It is said that Marek has bought a new house.

Marek is said to HAVE BEEN seriously ill. /Marek is said to HAVE BOUGHT a new house.

4. It is said that + osoba + Past Cont. / Present Perfect Cont.

Podmiot + is said to + HAVE + BEEN + CZASOWNIK + ING

It is said that Marek was painting the door when the accident happened.

Marek is said to HAVE BEEN PAINTING the door when the accident happened.

It is said that Marek has been looking for a job for 3 months now.

Marek is said to HAVE BEEN LOOKING for a job for 3 months now.