

The Passive

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1 Introduction

When we use an **active verb**, say what the subject does.

- It's a big company. It employs 200 people.

When we use a **passive verb**, we say what happens to the subject.

- This house is quite old. It was built in 1800.

Passive : BE(is, was, were, ...) + -ED (done, cleaned, ...)

2 Samples

2.1 Present Simple

- Active : Clean(s)
 - Someone *cleans* this room everyday.
- Passive : am/is/are + cleaned
 - This room *is cleaned* everyday.

2.2 Past Simple

- Active : Cleaned
 - Someone cleaned this room yesterday
- Passive : was/were + cleaned
 - This room was cleaned yesterday

3 Rules

- Who/what causes the action is unknown or unimportant.
 - A lot of monet **was stolen** during the robbery.
- If we want to say who/what causes the action we use **by**.
 - Two hundred people are employed **by** Sory.
- When the who/what is “people in general”
 - An order form **can be found** on page 2
- When who/what is obvious.
 - She **is being treated** in the hospital (The who is obviously the medical staff)
- In factual writing (procedures/processes)
 - Nuclear waste will still be radioactive even after 20,000 years, so **it must be disposed** of carefully. It **can be stored** as a liquid in stainless-steel containers which **are encased** in concrete. The most dangerous waste **can be turned** into glass. It **is planned** to store this glass in deep underground mines, in Bure.
- Formal contexts

Compare

1. Informal

- Someone will give you the questions a week before the test.

2. Formal

- You will be given the questions one week before the test.
- To avoid starting clauses with long expressions. In other words, it is often **more natural** to put long subjects at the end of a sentence. Using the passive allows us to do this.
 - **I was surprised** by Dons decision to quit his job and move to Sydney.
 - **is more natural than**
 - Dons decision to quit his job and move to Sydney surprised me.
- To emphasise new info (which appears at the end of a sentence).
 - This type of submarine was developed during WWII **by the Americans**.

Suite voir p.54 Livre de Grammaire.

- Infinitive
 - Active : (Clean) Someone will clean the room later
 - Passive : (be+cleaned) The room will be cleaned later
- Perfect Infinitive
 - Active :(have+cleaned) Someone should have cleaned the room
 - Passive : (have been + cleaned) The room should have been cleaned
- Present Perfect
 - Active : (have/has + cleaned) The room looks nice. Someone has cleaned it.

- Passive : (have/has been + cleaned) The room look nice. The room has been cleaned.
- Past Perfect
 - Active : (had + cleaned) The room looked nice. Someone had cleaned it before we arrived
 - Passive : (had been + cleaned) The room looked nice. It had been cleaned before we arrived.
- Present Continuous
 - Active : (am/is/are + cleaning) Someone is cleaning the room now
 - Passive(am/is/are + being cleaned) The room is being cleaned now.
- Past Continuous
 - Active : (was/were + cleaning) Someone was cleaning the room when I arrived
 - Passive : (was/were + being cleaned) The room was being cleaned when I arrived.

The passive isn't normally used in the following tenses (cf p.55):

- Present perfect continuous
- Past perfect continuous
- Future continuous
- Future perfect

4 Causatives

4.1 Get/have something done

- We use this when we arrange to have something done by someone else.
 - Did you get your hair cut ?
- Experiences that are usually negative or not intended
 - I noticed that Billy *had* his *tonsils removed*.

4.2 Get is more informal than have

- We can substitute the words need, want and would like for get/have
 - I *want* my car cleaned by the end of the day.

4.3 Get somebody to do/have somebody do.

- Actions we make someone/something do for us.
 - Did you get your brother to go to the store ?

4.4 Get/have somebody doing

- Actions that we make someone/something start/begin doing
 - With a few lessons, we'll soon *have* you *singing* like a star.