Passives

College of Agriculture
Department of Agricultural Machines
English_3
Lecture #5

Passives

Do you know how to use the passive voice to change the focus of a sentence?

Look at these examples to see how the passive voice is used.

- *A lot of olive oil is produced in Italy.*
- *This book was written by Angela Davis.*
- *The suspect will be released tomorrow.*
- *This product has not been tested on animals.*

We use the passive voice to change the focus of the sentence.

- *My bike was stolen.* (passive – focus on *my bike*)

- *Someone stole my bike.* (active – focus on *someone*)

We often use the passive:

➢ when we prefer not to mention who or what does the action (for example, it's

not known, it's obvious or we don't want to say).

➢ so that we can start a sentence with the most important or most logical

information.

➢ in more formal or scientific writing.

How we make the passive

We make the passive using the verb *be* + past participle. We start the sentence with the object.

Avatar	was	directed by James Cameron.
↓	↓	↓
Object	+ be +	past participle

- It is not always necessary to add who or what did the action.

My flight	is	cancelled.
↓	↓	↓
Object	+ be +	past participle

- Only the form of *be* changes to make the tense. The past participle stays the same. Here are examples of the passive in its most common tenses.

Present Simple and Present Continuous passive

Form

Present Simple Passive   *am/is/are* + past participle
Present Continuous Passive   *am/is/are being* + past participle

It	is is being	mended.
They	are are being	

Use

The uses are the same in the passive as in the active.

*My car **is serviced** every six months.* (habit)

*Computers **are used** in all areas of life and work.* (fact that is always true)

*Sorry about the mess. The house **is being redecorated** at the moment.* (activity happening now)

Past tenses in the passive

Form

Past Simple Passive	*was/were* + past participle
Past Continuous Passive	*was/were being* + past participle
Past Perfect Passive	*had been* + past participle

Use

The uses are the same in the passive as in the active.

The bridge **was built** *in 1876.* (finished action in the past)

The bomb **was being defused** *when it exploded.* (interrupted past activity)

The letter didn't arrive because it **had been sent** *to my old address.* (one action before another action in the past)

More Examples of Passive Sentences

Here are some more examples of passive sentences:

- Anita was driven to the theatre. (In this example, Anita did not perform the action of the <u>verb</u> "to drive." The action was done to her. She was the recipient of the action.)

- Nowadays, black kites are protected. (The action is being done to the subject "black kites.")

- The olives are stoned and crushed in this room. (The actions are being done to the subject "the olives.")

- **With a Passive Sentence, Use "By" to Show the Actor**

- In a passive sentence, the person or thing doing the action (the actor) is usually preceded by the word "by" For example:

  Anita was driven to the theatre **by** Carla.

- Nowadays, black kites are protected **by** law.

- The olives are stoned and crushed in this room **by** my son.

  The opposite of a passive sentence is an active sentence, in which the subject does perform the action of the verb.

What Does "Passive Voice" Mean?

The verb in a passive sentence is said to be in the passive voice. Likewise, the verb in an active sentence is said to be in the active voice. For example: The bed was made by Rachel.

(In this passive sentence, "was made" is in the passive voice.)

Rachel made the bed.

(In this active sentence, "made" is in the active voice.)

Why Should I Care About Passive Sentences?

Active sentences come in the form "A did B." Passive sentences, however, come in the form "B was done to A." As a result, active sentences are the easier to read, and they are often more succinct and direct. Consequently, lots of companies instruct their staff to avoid using passive sentences. This practice is so common that many grammar checkers (be they computer programs or real people) will suggest an active version of your passive sentence. However, if you prefer your passive version, stick with it.

Here are five good reasons to use passive sentences.

(Reason 1) **Passive sentences are useful to avoid blame.**

Passive sentences are quite useful if you're trying not to apportion blame. The document had been released into the public domain.

(This passive sentence hides the blame.)

Look at the active version: Jackie released the document into the public domain.

Here are some more example that do not reveal who was responsible: Bad advice was given.

A serious failing in standing operating procedures had occurred.

(Reason 2) Passive sentences can show a neutral or objective tone.

It is anticipated that concessions will be offered by both parties.

(This passive sentence expresses a neutral tone.)

(Reason 3) Passive sentences are appropriate when the doer of the action is unimportant, unknown, or obvious.

Pistachio nuts are grown in Iran.

(The doer of the action (called "the agent") is unimportant.)

His parade uniform was stolen. (The agent is unknown.)

The thief was arrested. (The agent is obvious. It's the police.)

(Reason 4) Passive sentences allow you to put something you want to emphasize at the start of your sentence.

An estimated 258,000 people were injured in alcohol-related crashes.

(The number of people is the focus of this sentence.)

(Reason 5) A passive construction allows you to use the same subject twice.

Martin crashed into the barrier and was tossed into the crowd.

(In this sentence, the subject is "Martin." The verb "crashed" is an active verb. It is followed by "was tossed," which is a passive verb. This construction allows you to say two things about "Martin" in a natural and efficient way.)

THANK YOU