



GENERAL ENGLISH

GRAMMAR REVIEW

*ACTIVE AND
PASSIVE*



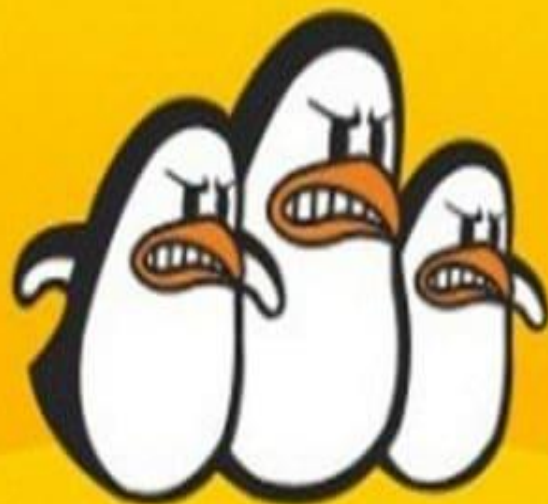
Introduction

In the active voice, the subject of the sentence DOES the action:

- **Jake wrote a letter.**
subject / verb / object



ACTIVE VOICE



Wild penguins

attacked **my sister** .

action

subject

PASSIVE VOICE



subject

action

My sister **was attacked**

by wild penguins.



Introduction

In the passive voice, the subject of the sentence is acted upon:

- A letter was written (by Jake).
subject / verb

Introduction



Notice that the object of the active sentence became the subject of the passive sentence:

- **Jake** wrote a **letter**.
subject / verb / object
- A **letter** was written (by **Jake**).
subject / verb

Introduction



If we want, we can include "by Jake" to say who did the action.

We can include this when the doer of the action is interesting in some way, or is somewhat important.

Introduction



We do not include "by..." when:

- The doer of the action is **unknown**
- The doer of the action is **"people in general"**
- The doer of the action is **completely unimportant**



Introduction



Doer is unknown:

- The money was stolen.

Doer is people in general:

- Black cats are believed to bring bad luck.

Doer is completely unimportant:

- This bridge was built in 1889.

Passive Voice Structure



The passive voice is formed by:

a form of
the verb
TO BE

+

past
participle
of the verb

Passive Voice Structure



The verb “to be” in the passive is in the same tense as the original verb:

- **Jake** wrote a **letter**. (simple past)
- A **letter** was written.
(was = simple past of “to be”)

LETS SEE HOW TO FORM THE PASSIVE VOICE FOR EACH VERB TENSE



Present Simple



Active:

Factory workers test the products.

Passive:

The products are tested.

Past Simple



Active:

We renovated our facilities last month.

Passive:

Our facilities were renovated last month.

Future Simple



Active:
Everyone will exchange gifts at Christmas.

Passive:
Gifts will be exchanged at Christmas.



Present Continuous



Active: Teachers are using the new book in their classrooms.

Passive: The new book is being used in classrooms.

Past Continuous



Active: The manager was ignoring the safety regulations.

Passive: The safety regulations were being ignored.

Present Perfect



Active:

Someone has eaten the last piece of cake.

Passive:

The last piece of cake has been eaten.

Past Perfect



Active: I discovered that someone had copied my brilliant idea.

Passive: I discovered that my brilliant idea had been copied.

Future Perfect



Active: The store will have delivered the new furniture by Friday.

Passive: The new furniture **will have been delivered** by Friday.

- Note that the form of the verb ‘to be’ is singular or plural depending on the **New subject** of the sentence

Eg: Teachers **are using** the new book in their classrooms
The new book **is being** used in classrooms



Passive Voice Structure



We can also add modal verbs to passive structures, typically:

Modals + Passive Voice

We can also add modal verbs to passive structures, typically:

- the present
(modal + be + past participle)

The size can be adjusted.

We can also add modal verbs to passive structures, typically:

- the present perfect
(modal + have been + past participle)

The errors should have been corrected.

Possibility:

- **Present:** This recipe can be made with margarine instead of butter.
- **Past:** That was very dangerous. You could have been killed!

Modals + Passive Voice



Impossibility:

- **Present:** Crops can't be grown here because the soil is too rocky.
- **Past:** The work couldn't have been finished in a day. It was at least a week's worth of work.

Modals + Passive Voice



Permission:

- **Positive:** Photos may be taken during the performance.
- **Negative:** Cell phones may not be used in the classroom.

Modals + Passive Voice



Requirement:

- **Positive:** The shipment must be delivered before the deadline.
- **Negative:** These samples must not be exposed to contamination.

Modals + Passive Voice



Advice:

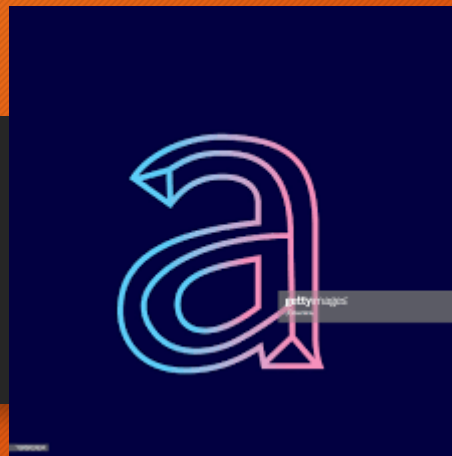
- **Present:** Something should be done about the problem.
- **Past:** Something should have been done about the problem a long time ago.

Change these sentences to the passive voice, using a form of the verb be + past participle of the main verb.

Warning - two of them can't be changed in to passive.

- 1. Some people are having trouble understanding the instructions
- 2. Someone will announce the winner of the contest tomorrow.
- 3. People report that the damage from the earthquake is extensive
- 4. Hopefully, scientists will have cured cancer by the year 2050.
- 5. I was surprised when I heard that they had approved my scholarship application.
- 6. Nobody has painted these walls yet.





- 7. People are debating this issue around the world.
- 8. Journalists were bombarding the actor with questions.
- 9. Somebody finally took down the office Christmas decorations in February.
- 10. The government has passed a new law.
- 11. The course consists of 40 classes.
- 12. We held the event in a conference center.

ANSWERS

- 1. Cannot be changed in to passive
- 2. The winner of the contest will be announced tomorrow
- 3. It is reported that the damage from the earthquake is extensive.

Or: The damage from the earthquake is reported to be extensive

- 4. Hopefully, cancer will have been cured by the year 2050.
- 5. I was surprised when I heard that my scholarship application had been approved.
- 6. These walls haven't been painted yet.



- 7 . This issue is being debated around the world.
8. The actor was being bombarded with questions.
- 9 . The Christmas decorations were finally taken down in February.
10. A new law has been passed.
11. Cannot be changed in to passive
12. The event was held in a conference center.



.....WRITING TASK.....

- Write about one significant historical or cultural event in Sri Lanka
- When appropriate, you can use passive voice

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