

The Passive

Tenses	Passive structure	Example
Simple present	Am/are/is + past participle	English is spoken here.
Present Be + ing	Am/are/is being + pp	Excuse the mess: the house is being painted.
Simple past	Was/were + pp	I wasn't invited, but I went.
Past Be + ing	Was/were being + pp	I felt I was being watched.
Present perfect	Have/has been + pp	Has Mary been told?
Past perfect	Had been + pp	I knew I had been forgotten.
Will future	Will be + pp	You 'll be told soon.
Will + perfect	Will have been + pp	Everything will have been done by Tuesday.
Going to future	Am/are/is going to be + pp	Who's going to be invited?

The **SUBJECT** of a passive verb becomes the **OBJECT** of an active verb

This house was built in 1486

German is spoken in Austria

They built this house in 1486

Austrians speak German

To turn an active sentence into the passive you simply follow these steps:

1. Identify the **VERB** and the **TENSE**
2. Use the following structure **BE + PAST PARTICIPLE VERB**
3. Conjugate **BE** using the **TENSE** identified in 1.
4. Reformulate the sentence inverting **SUBJECT** and **OBJECT**.
5. Check the persons for the verb

① Make the sentences passive. Use *by ...* only if it is really necessary to say who does/did the action

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| 1. Shakespeare wrote <i>Hamlet</i> . | 9. A drunken motorist knocked her down. |
| 2. They have arrested her for shoplifting. | 10. Liverpool beat Manchester 3-0 yesterday. |
| 3. They are repairing your car now. | 11. The Chinese invented paper. |
| 4. People in Chile speak Spanish. | 12. You need hops to make beer. |
| 5. Has anybody asked Peter? | 13. They don't sell stamps in bookshops. |
| 6. My mother made this ring. | 14. The directors are still considering your application. |
| 7. Electricity drives this car. | |
| 8. Somebody will tell you where to go. | |

- Passives are common when we are thinking about what is done to the person or thing that we are interested in, not about what he/she/it does.
- Passives can help us to go on talking about the same thing, in cases where an active verb would need an unwanted new subject.

② Choose the best sentence from each pair to build up a continuous text.

1. a. HOW BOOKS ARE MADE
b. HOW PEOPLE MAKE BOOKS
2. a. First of all, the printers print big sheets of paper.
b. First of all, big sheets of paper are printed.
3. a. Each sheet contains the text of a number of pages (e.g. 32).
b. The text of a number of pages (e.g. 32) is contained in each sheet.
4. a. People fold and cut the sheets to produce the section of the book.
b. The sheets are folded and cut to produce the sections of the book.
5. a. The sections are called signatures.
b. We call these sections signatures.
6. a. The printers put all the signatures together in the correct order.
b. All the signatures are put together in the correct order.
7. a. Then they are bound together and their edges are trimmed.
b. Then they bind the signatures together and trim the edges.
8. a. Finally, the cover – which was printed separately – is attached.
b. Finally, they attach the cover – which they have printed separately.
9. a. Now the publishers can publish the book.
b. Now the book can be published.

③ Complete with the right form.

A 30-second earthquake (rock)* buildings and (shatter)* windows in Los Angeles last night. Highway 118 (heavily/damage). A small shopping mall (destroy). A fire (believe) to (cause) by a fractured gas main*. Hundreds of shops and cinemas (evacuate). 40 people (report) to (kill).

Five men (question) about an armed robbery in a post office in Poole, Dorset. David Scovell, 53, who (shoot) in the chest and leg when he (try) to stop two men escaping, (still – be) critically ill last night. Two years ago, the same gang (try)* for assault and robbery.

Rock = secouer / shatter = briser / gas main = conduite de gaz / try = juger (un procès = a trial)