

## Passive voice

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**

### Infinitive

Present infinitive

active: (to) do/clean/see etc.

Somebody will clean the room later.

passive: (to) be done/cleaned/seen etc.

The room will **be cleaned** later.

The situation is serious. Something must **be done** before it's too late. .

A mystery is something that can't **be explained**.

Perfect infinitive

active: have done/cleaned/seen etc.

Somebody should have cleaned the room.

passive: have been done/cleaned/seen etc..

The room should **have been cleaned**.

I haven't received the letter yet. It might **have been sent** to the wrong address.

There were some problems at first but they seem **to have been solved**.

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.

Tense	Example	Structure
Present simple	Alioli is made from oil, garlic and salt.	is/are + past participle
Present continuous	The hall is being painted this week.	is/are being + past participle
Past simple	John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963.	was/were + past participle
Past continuous participle	The signs were being put up last week.	was/were being + past
Present perfect participle	Oranges have been grown here for centuries.	has/have been + past
Past perfect past participle	When he got home, he found that his flat had been burgled.	had been +
Future simple	The work will be finished next week.	will be + past participle

Some verbs can have **2 objects** . e.g. give:

We gave *the police* **the information** – it is possible to make 2 passive sentences:

*The police* were given the information.

**The information** was given to the police.

Other verbs with 2 objects are: ask, offer, pay, show, teach, tell

**Passive with –ing forms:**

I don't like **being told** what to do.

He hates **being kept** waiting.

We climbed over the wall without **being seen**.