

A

I was offered ... / we were given ... etc.

Some verbs can have two objects. For example, give:

- Somebody gave the police the information. (= Somebody gave the information to the police)

So it is possible to make two passive sentences:

- The police were given the information. *or*

The information was given to the police.

Other verbs which can have two objects are:

ask offer pay show reach tell

When we use these verbs in the passive, most often we begin with the *person*:

- I was offered the job, but I refused it. (= they offered me the job)
- You will be given plenty of time to decide. (= we will give you plenty of time)
- Have you been shown the new machine? (= has anybody shown you?)
- The men were paid £400 to do the work. (= somebody paid the men £400)

B

I don't like being ...

The passive of doing/seeing etc. is being done / being seen etc. Compare:

*active:* I don't like people telling me what to do.

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

I remember being taken to the zoo when I was a child.

(= I remember somebody taking me to the zoo)

Steve hates being kept waiting. (= he hates people keeping him waiting)

We managed to climb over the wall without being seen. (= without anybody seeing us)

C

I was born ...

We say 'I was born ...' (not 'I am born').

I was born in Chicago.

Where were you born? (not 'Where are you born?') *past*

*but*

How many babies are born every day? *present*

Get

You can use *get* instead of *be* in the passive:

There was a fight at the party, but nobody got hurt. (= nobody was hurt)

I don't often get invited to parties. (= I'm not often invited)

I'm surprised Liz didn't get offered the job. (= Liz wasn't offered the job)

You can use *get* only when things *happen*. For example, you cannot use *get* in the following

sentences:

Jill is liked by everybody. (not gets liked – this is not a 'happening')

He was a mystery man. Very little was known about him. (not got known)

We use *get* mainly in informal spoken English. You can use *be* in all situations.

We also use *get* in the following expressions (which are not passive in meaning):

get married, get divorced

get lost (= not know where you are)

get dressed (= put on your clothes)

get changed (= change your clothes)

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