

Passive Voice

Usage

We use passive voice when the doer of the action is **obvious, unimportant, or unknown**.

If we want to say who did the action, we can use the preposition '**by**'.

Passive voice is generally considered to be a more formal way of speaking English. You may often see it used in news articles, to add emphasis to the action, and the receiver of the action, rather than the doer.

Form

Passive Voice in Present

Affirmative: Subject + Am/Is/Are + Past participle

Negative: Subject + Am not/isn't/aren't + Past participle

Question: Am/Is/Are + Subject + Past participle?

Spanish **is spoken** in Colombia.

This area **isn't** often **affected** by such extreme weather.

Are poisonous spiders **found** in this area?



Passive Voice

Passive Voice in Past

Affirmative: Subject + Was/were + Past participle

Negative: Subject + Wasn't/weren't + Past participle

Question: Was/Were + Subject + Past participle?

Andrea **was promoted** to regional manager.

Henry **wasn't invited** to the party.

Was this product **made** locally?



Passive Voice in Future

Affirmative: Subject + Will + Be + Past participle

Negative: Subject + Won't + Be + Past participle

Question: Will + Subject + Be + Past participle?

The ribbon at the opening ceremony **will be cut** by the town's mayor.

Meat **won't be served** at the event. It's a vegetarian menu only.

Will the carpets **be cleaned** tomorrow?



Passive Voice in Present Perfect

Affirmative: Subject + Have/has + Been + Past participle

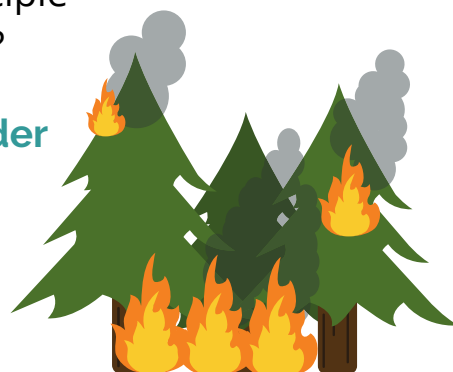
Negative: Subject + Haven't/hasn't + Been + Past participle

Question: Have/Has + Subject + Been + Past participle?

A forest fire near the highway **has been brought under control** by firefighters.

The customers **haven't been given** a refund yet.

Has the thief **been found** yet?



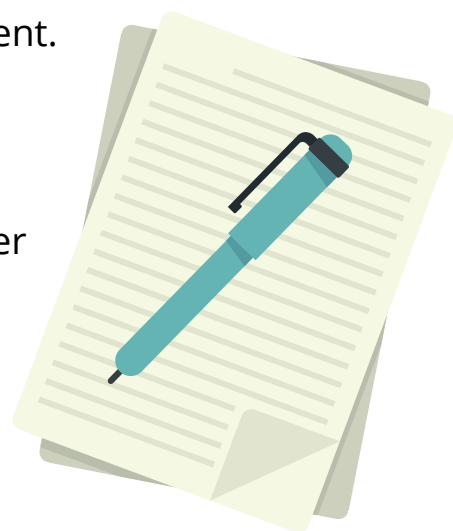
REMEMBER!

The passive voice can be used with all tenses or auxiliaries which use the verb to be. In fact, I just used it now! This includes with **progressive tenses**, other **perfect tenses** (such as **past perfect** or **future perfect**), and auxiliaries such as 'can', 'could', 'must' and 'should'.

Practice activity

Select the correct option to fill in the gap.

1. Animal Farm [**write**] by George Orwell.
2. Many different types of berries [**grow**] on this farm.
3. The criminals [**found**] by police hiding out in an abandoned warehouse.
4. If you leave towels on the floor, they [**change**].
5. The city of Christchurch [**hit**] by a large earthquake in 2011.
6. All of the exams [**mark**]. It's time for the students to collect their results.
7. Gravity [**discover**] by Isaac Newton.
8. If you don't have photo ID, you [**allow**] in to the event.
9. The first thermoelectric power generator [**create**] by Maria Telkes, a Hungarian scientist, in 1947.
10. 'You Oughta Know' [**write**] and originally [**sing**] by Alanis Morissette, and [**cover**] by Beyoncé at her iconic 2011 Glastonbury headline show.



Answers

1. **was written**, 2. **are grown**, 3. **have been found/were found**, 4. **will be changed**, 5. **was hit**, 6. **have been marked**, 7. **was discovered**, 8. **won't be allowed**, 9. **was created**, 10. **was written, sung, was covered**.