



2nd semester



Topic 23: The Passive



Functions of the passive voice:

- The passive voice is used to show interest in the person or object that experiences an action rather than the person or object that performs the action. In other words, the most important thing or person becomes the subject of the sentence.

Examples

- The passive voice **is used** frequently. (= we are interested in the passive voice, not in who uses it.)
- The house **was built** in 1654. (= we are interested in the house, not in who built it.)
- The road **is being repaired**. (= we are interested in the road, not in the people who are doing the repairs.)



Explaining

Sometimes we use the passive voice because we don't know or do not want to express who performed the action.

Examples

- I noticed that a window **had been left** open.
- Every year thousands of people **are killed** on our roads.
- All the cookies **have been eaten**.
- My car **has been stolen**!



Explaining

The passive voice is often used in formal texts. Switching to the active voice will make your writing clearer and easier to read.

Passive	Active
A great deal of meaning is conveyed by a few well-chosen words.	A few well-chosen words convey a great deal of meaning.
Our planet is wrapped in a mass of gases.	A mass of gases wrap around our planet.
Waste materials are disposed of in a variety of ways.	The city disposes of waste materials in a variety of ways.

Explaining

If we want to say who or what performs the action while using the passive voice, we use the preposition *by*. When we know who performed the action and are interested in him, it is always better to switch to the active voice instead.

Passive	Active
"A Hard Day's Night" was written by the Beatles.	The Beatles wrote "A Hard Day's Night".
The movie ET was directed by Spielberg.	Spielberg directed the movie ET.
This house was built by my father.	My father built this house.



Explaining

Forming the passive voice

The passive voice in English is composed of two elements:

the appropriate form of the verb 'to be' + past participle

Affirmative	Negative	Interrogative	Negative Interrogative
The house was built in 1899.	The house wasn't built in 1899.	Was the house built in 1899?	Wasn't the house built in 1899?
These houses were built in 1899.	These houses weren't built in 1899.	Were these houses built in 1899?	Weren't these houses built in 1899?



To clean, passive voice

Subject	+ to be (conjugated)	+ past participle	+ rest of sentence
Simple present			
The house	is	cleaned	every day.
Present continuous			
The house	is being	cleaned	at the moment.
Simple past			
The house	was	cleaned	yesterday.
Past continuous			
The house	was being	cleaned	last week.
Present perfect			
The house	has been	cleaned	since you left.
Past perfect			
The house	had been	cleaned	before they arrived.
Future			
The house	will be	cleaned	next week.
Future continuous			
The house	will be being	cleaned	tomorrow.
Present conditional			
The house	would be	cleaned	if they had visitors.
Past conditional			
The house	would have been	cleaned	if it had been dirty.
Infinitive			
The house	must be	cleaned	before we arrive.



Explaining



Passive voice with infinitives

The infinitive passive voice is used after modal verbs and other most verbs normally followed by an infinitive.

Examples

You **have to be tested** on your English grammar.

John **might be promoted** next year.

She **wants to be invited** to the party.

I **expect to be surprised** on my birthday.

You **may be disappointed**.



Explaining



Passive voice with gerunds

Gerunds are used after prepositions and verbs normally followed by a gerund.

Examples

I **remember being taught** to drive.

The children are excited **about being taken** to the zoo.

The children are excited **to be taken** to the zoo.

Most film stars **hate being interviewed**.

Most film stars **hate to be interviewed**.

Poodles **like to be pampered**.

Poodles **like being pampered**.