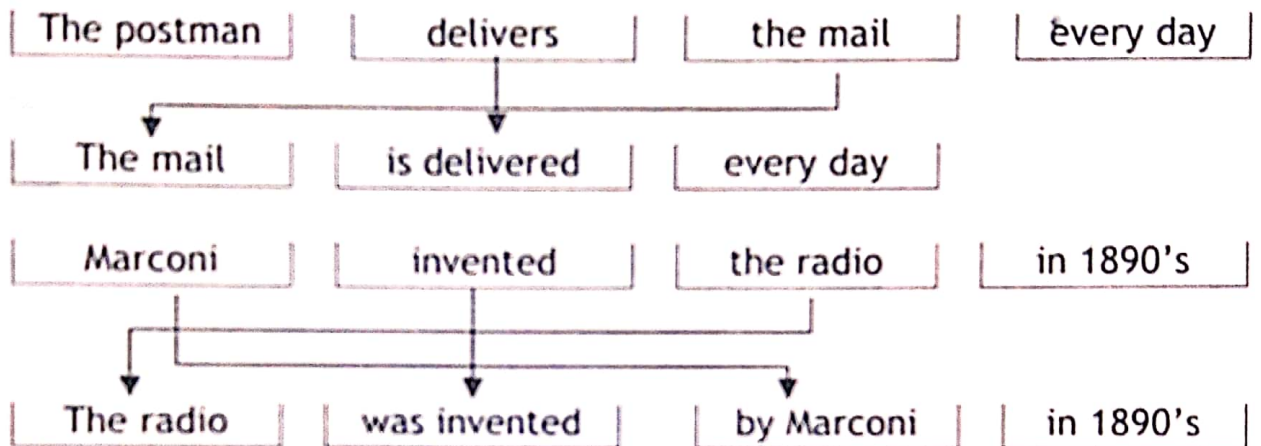


THE PASSIVE VOICE

1 Form: The passive voice is formed by putting the verb 'to be' in the same tense as the active verb and adding the past participle of the active verb. The agent is often not mentioned. If it is mentioned it is preceded by 'by'.

Examples:



2 The passive is used:

A- When it is not necessary to mention the doer of the action as it is clear who he is.

- *The rubbish has not been collected.*

B- When we don't know, or don't exactly, or have forgotten who did the action

- *The minister has been murdered.*
- *You will be met at the station.*
- *I have been told that...*

C- When the subject of the active verb would be 'people'.

- *He is believed to earn a great deal of money. (People believe)*

D- When we are more interested in the action than the person who does it.

- *The house next door was bought (by Mr. Jones).*

3 Passive Object Clauses

When we use an object clause, we can have a special passive structure:

Active {subject} + {verb phrase} + [that] + {object clause}

Passive {it} + {passive verb} + [that] + {object clause}

Active People say that he is rich.

Passive *It is said that that he is rich.* or

Active {subject} + {verb phrase} + {object} + {object verb} ...

Passive {object} + {passive verb} + {passive infinitive} ...

Active People say that he is rich.

Passive He is said to be rich.

Active People say that he was rich. (the verb is in the past)

Passive He is said to have been rich.

This happens when you talk about an opinion, suggestion or belief which uses a verb like: *agree, arrange, announce, believe, consider, decide, expect, fear, feel, find, hope, intend, know, mention, regret, report, say, suppose, think, understand.*

4 Passive Two Objects

Sometimes you can make two different passive sentences if the original sentence has two objects:

{subject} + {verb} + {direct object} + {indirect object}

- *The children sent an invitation to the headmaster.*

{direct object an invitation} + {passive verb} + {indirect object the headmaster}

- *An invitation was sent to the headmaster [by the children].*

{indirect object} + {passive verb} + {direct object} ...

- *The headmaster was sent an invitation [by the children].*

The second structure is the more common of the two.

5 Object Complements

After some verbs the direct object can be followed by 'an object complement' - a noun or adjective which describes or classifies the object. In passive clauses these are subject complements; they come after the verb.

- *They elected Mr. Anderson president.*
- *Mr. Anderson was elected president*
- *The children called him stupid.*
- *He was called stupid.*
- *You have made the house beautiful.*
- *The house has been made beautiful.*
- *I will paint the room blue.*
- *The room will be painted blue.*

6 Active tenses and their passive equivalents

ACTIVE	PASSIVE
Simple Present is/are + past participle	
They make shoes in that factory.	Shoes are made in that factory.
Present Continuous is/are + being + past participle	
They are repairing the streets this month.	The streets are being repaired this month.
Simple Past was/were + past participle	
Fleming discovered Penicillin in 1928.	Penicillin was discovered by Fleming in 1928.
Past Continuous was/were + being + past participle	
They were painting the house when I arrived.	The house was being painted when I arrived.
Future Simple shall/will be + past participle is/are going to be + past participle	
I will finish work tomorrow.	Work will be finished tomorrow.
They are going to build a new factory in my town.	A new factory is going to be built in my town.
Present Perfect have/has + been + past participle	
They have produced over 20 models in the past two years.	Over 20 models have been produced in the past two years.
Past Perfect had + been + past participle	
They had finished the preparations by the time the guests arrived.	The preparations had been finished by the time the guests arrived.
Future Perfect will have + been + past participle	
He will have written the report by 5 p.m.	The report will have been written by 5 p.m.
Perfect Conditional would have been + past participle	
She would have finished work.	Work would have been finished.

Modals + be + past participle

can - could - may - might - shall - should - will - would - must - have to -
has to - had to - ought to

You can do it in five minutes	It can be done in five minutes
Sara has to wash the dishes every day.	The dishes have to be washed by Sara every day.

verb + object + infinitive

He asked me to post the letter.	I was asked to post the letter.
I saw him come out of the house.	He was seen to come out of the house.
They believe him to be dangerous.	He is believed to be dangerous.

Questions in the passive

Why didn't they offer him the job?	Why was not he offered the job?
Will someone send me the details?	Will I be sent the details?