

THE PASSIVE VOICE (1)

(I have done something/Something has been done)

Look at these sentences:

1. The government **has established** a number of modern hospitals in the Kingdom.
2. A number of modern hospitals **have been established** (by the government) in the Kingdom.

Sentence 1 has the same meaning as that of Sentence 2. However, in Sentence 1 the emphasis is on the **doer of the action** (namely, "the government"); in Sentence 2, the emphasis is either on the **action** itself (the establishing of hospitals) or on the **object** (namely, "a number of modern hospitals"). Sentence 1 is in the Active Voice; Sentence 2, in the Passive Voice.

In changing an active sentence into the passive, we do the following:

- (a) We start the passive sentence with the object of the active sentence.
- (b). We supply the form of BE that matches the tense of the verb in the active sentence. Thus if the verb is in the present perfect tense, for example, we use "has/have been".
(See p. 57.)
- (c) We supply the past participle of the verb (after the form of BE).

(d) We use “by”, followed by the subject of the active sentence.

Note however that when the subject is vague or unimportant, or when we do not want to mention it, we omit it; e.g.

ACTIVE: Somebody has broken the window.

PASSIVE: The window has been broken. (NOT: The window has been broken by somebody.)

ACTIVE: I have already offered the post to another applicant.

PASSIVE: Another applicant has already been offered the post.
(Here, the passive form is preferred to the active one; the speaker does not want to mention the doer of the action.)

ACTIVE: The airport authorities have cancelled all flights owing to fog.

PASSIVE: All flights have been cancelled owing to fog.
(Here, the passive form is preferred to the active one because it is unimportant to mention the doer of the action.)

TABLE SHOWING ACTIVE AND PASSIVE FORMS (Of the Verb "Observe" as an Example)

Active Verb Forms

Passive Verb Forms

	<u>BE</u>	<u>P.P.</u>
has observed (or have observed)	has/have been	observed
had observed	had been	observed
observe (or observes)	am/is/are	observed
observed	was/were	observed
shall/will observe	shall/will be	observed
should/would observe	should/would be	observed
am/is/are observing	am/is/are being	observed
was/were observing	was/were being	observed
shall/will have observed	shall/will have been	observed
should/would have observed	should/would have been	observed
am/is/are going to observe	am/is/are going to be	observed
can/could observe	can/could be	observed
may/might observe	may/might be	observed
must observe	must be	observed

There are verbs that can take two objects, an indirect object and a direct one; e.g.

give ask deny call show bring fetch
offer tell refuse appoint get sell promise
pay order recommend lend write buy teach
make

If a sentence containing two objects is changed into the Passive, either the indirect object (which stands for a person) or the direct object (which usually stands for a thing) may become the subject--though it is perhaps more usual to make the personal object the subject of the Passive Voice; e.g.

ACTIVE: They awarded the Muslim scholar the International King Faisal Prize in 1411 H.

PASSIVE: The Muslim scholar was awarded the International King Faisal Prize in 1411 H. (More usual)

OR

The International King Faisal Prize was awarded (to) the Muslim scholar in 1411 H.

8 Exercise 30

Change the following sentences into the Passive Voice:

1. The police kept the man in custody last Thursday.
2. Fire destroyed much of London in the seventh century.
3. They will evict the tenant for not paying his rent.
4. The teach Contrastive & Applied Linguistics in the third year.
5. You must hand in the essays this time next Wednesday.
6. The demonstrator was administering the make-up exam when the Vice-Dean passed by.
7. My colleague is running off a few extra copies of the document.
8. I have xeroxed three copies of the testimonial.
9. Time is up; you must turn in your papers now.
10. One may apply for an entry or an exit visa on weekdays only.
11. Raise this question in the next meeting, please.
(Begin with "Let....").
12. They will deduct some money as commission.

Exercise 31

Change the following sentences into the Passive Voice. Where the verb has two objects, begin with the indirect object (i.e. that which stands for a person).

1. The consular authorities have refused Mr. X a visa.
2. Didn't the man give the waiter a tip?
3. Somebody saw the man breaking into the apartment last night.
4. Somebody saw the burglar break into the apartment last night.
5. The Ministry of Interior has refused the hijackers entry to the country.
6. By next year the government will have established more and more Primary Care Units.
7. When a blackmailer threatened him, he immediately phoned the police.
8. If the patient had taken the aspirin tablets on an empty stomach, he would have complained of heartburn.
9. The Association is going to fill the vacancy soon.
10. You ought to have made all the necessary arrangements before.

Exercise 32

Change the following sentences from Passive into Active:

1. A number of highways have been built by the construction company.
2. The application forms have been submitted to the Registrar by the candidates.
3. Health is not valued till sickness comes. (An English proverb)
4. The police were not notified of the accident last night.