

THE PASSIVE VOICE (2)

(They think that he is. . . / He is thought to be . . .)

Look at these examples:

1. ACTIVE: They **believe** that the man **is** innocent.
PASSIVE: The man is believed **to be** innocent.
2. ACTIVE: They **presumed** that the candidate **was** eligible for admission.
PASSIVE: The candidate was presumed **to be** eligible for admission.
3. ACTIVE: They **think** that the candidate **was/has been** eligible for the post.
PASSIVE: The candidate is thought **to have been** eligible for the post.

In each of the above complex sentences there is a main clause (e.g. "They believe"), followed by a noun clause introduced by "that" (e.g. "that the man is innocent"). The verb in the main clause is one of the verbs in the following list: "believe," "presume," "think," "say," "consider," "prove," "understand," "expect," "report," "claim," "allege," "admit," etc.

In changing such active sentences as "They believe that...." into the Passive, we follow these steps:

- (a) We begin with the subject of the noun clause (e.g. "the man," "the candidate," etc.) as the subject of the passive sentence.
- (b) We change the active verb of the main clause (e.g. "believe," "presumed," etc.) into the passive form.
- (c) Then we supply the *simple* or *perfect infinitive* of the verb in the noun clause as follows:

1. We choose the simple infinitive (e.g. "to be") if the time reference of the verb in the main clause is the *same* as that of the verb in the noun clause (e.g. simple present + simple present; simple past + simple past).
2. We choose the perfect infinitive (e.g. "to have been") if the time reference of the verb in the noun clause is *earlier* than that of the verb in the main clause (e.g. simple present + simple past; simple present + present perfect).

Exercise 33

Change the following sentences into the Passive Voice, beginning with the underlined word(s) and making sure that you supply the appropriate infinitive (simple or perfect) of the verb in the noun clause:

1. People believe that the official is highly scrupulous.
2. They say that he is an honest, hard-working man.
3. They consider that this surgeon is a brilliant practitioner.
4. The medical journal claims that the drug produced no undesirable side-effects.
5. An official spokesman admitted that the information had been obtained from unreliable sources.
6. The Staff members think that the Dean has acted with firmness and wisdom.
7. The medical journal claims that the drug produces no undesirable side-effects.