

Passive Voice



TENSE		ACTIVE	PASSIVE	NOTE: <i>the action is done to the subject</i>
Simple	Present	ask(s)	am is are asked	He asks / He is asked <i>Он спрашивает/ Его спрашивают</i>
	Past	asked	was were asked	
	Future	will ask	will be asked	
Continuous	Present	am is are asking	am is are being asked	He is asking / He is being asked <i>Он сейчас спрашивает/ Его сейчас спрашивают</i>
	Past	was were asking	was were being asked	
	Future	will be asking	—	
Perfect	Present	have has asked	have has been asked	He has asked / He has been asked <i>Он уже спросил/ Его уже спросили</i>
	Past	had asked	had been asked	
	Future	will have asked	will have been asked	

Modal Verbs

can/could
may/might
must/have to
should/would
needn't

be done
have been done

Simple	1. A lot of rice is eaten in Asia. 2. These houses were built about twenty-five years ago. 3. Our class will be taught by another teacher next year.
	4. Lions and tigers can be seen in zoos. 5. When he was in hospital, he had to be fed ; he couldn't eat himself. 6. The books may be kept for two weeks. After that they must be returned to the library.
Continuous	7. The little girl has been very ill and the doctor says she mustn't go to school, so she is being taught at home. 8. I couldn't use my car last week, it was being repaired .
Perfect	9. This room hasn't been swept for a fortnight. 10. He said the newspaper had been thrown away.

1. We use the passive when it is not so important (or unknown) who or what did the action:
 - My article **was published** yesterday.
 - Rome **wasn't built** in one day.
 - The origin of the Universe **will never be explained**.

2. It's wrong to consider the passive to be another way of expressing a sentence in the active voice. We use it only when we don't know or don't want to say who did it:
 - Helen **likes** English. (But not "*English is liked by Helen*". It sounds funny in English).

3. Only the verbs which take an object can go into the passive. Intransitive verbs can't be used in the passive voice. They are as follows:
 - *to fly, to arrive*
 - *to be, to become*
 - *to have, to lack, to possess, to consist, to belong*
 - *to hold, to suit, to resemble, to fit*
 - *to appear, to seem, to come, to go, to last*
 - The hall **holds** 500 people.
 - They **have** a nice house.
 - My shoes **don't fit** me.
 - Sylvia **resembles** a Greek goddess.

4. There are sentences in the active having a passive meaning:

This shirt **irons** well.

Your book **reads** well.

This coat **will wear** a lifetime.

5. If you want to say who did it or what caused the action, use *by* or *with*. *BY* – with animated things and elements, *WITH* – for instruments, tools, weapons, materials.

The house was built **by** my grandfather.

It was destroyed **by** fire.

The room was filled **with** smoke.

The wood can be cut **with** a knife.

6. We use the Infinitive after modal verbs and a number of other verbs. The Passive Infinitive is *to be done/to have been done*:

I **want to be left** alone.

The music **could be heard** far away.

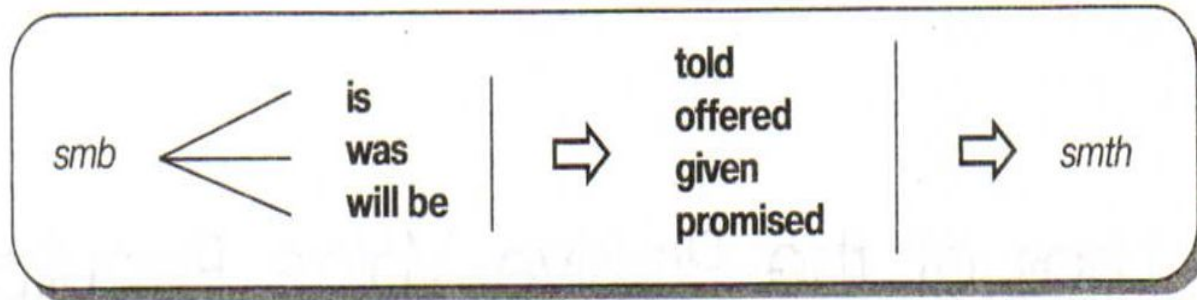
My bicycle has disappeared. It **must have been** stolen.

7. If it is possible to make two different passive sentences, it is more usual for the passive sentence to begin with the person:

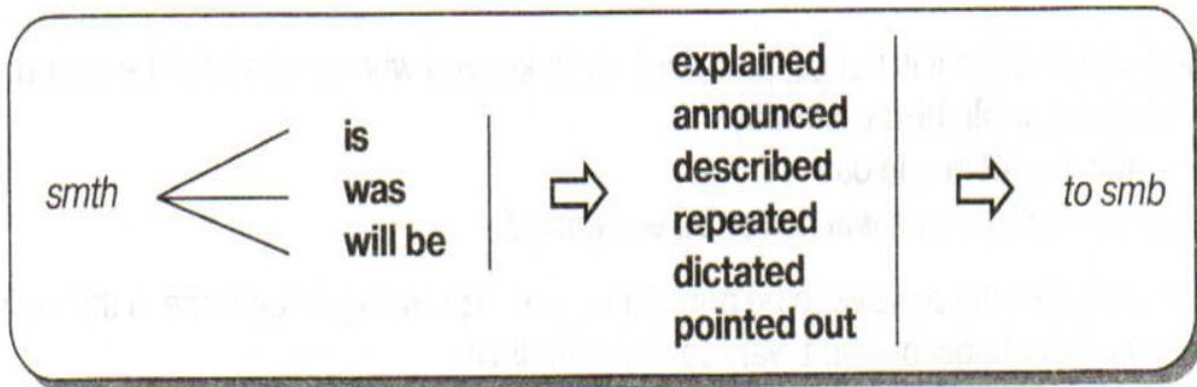
Ann *wasn't offered* the job.

The job *wasn't offered* to **Ann**. (seldom used)

Study the Pattern



8. Some verbs can be used only in the following type of passive constructions:



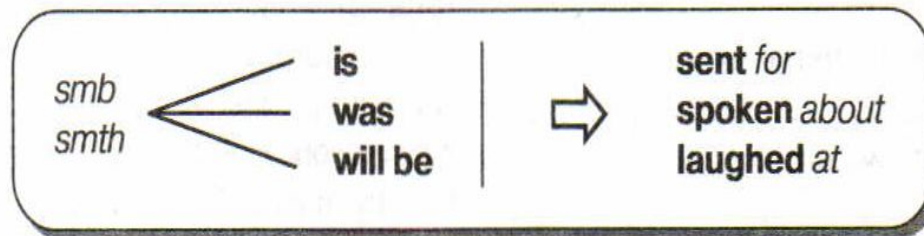
- The news **was announced** to everybody.
- Everything **will be explained** to you later.

9. Passive constructions with the verbs *to advise*, *to allow*, *to ask*, *to award*, *to deny*, *to forbid*, *to forgive*, *to grant*, *to offer*, *to order*, *to pay*, *to promise*, *to refuse*, *to show*, *to teach*, *to tell*, etc. present some difficulties. In English the subject of such constructions corresponds to the Russian indirect object. The centre of a passive construction in English is not changed. Pay attention to the following difference:

	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
Russian	Я просил ... Я сказал ему ...	Меня попросили ... Мне сказали ...
English	I asked ... I told him ...	I was asked ... I was told ...

- He **was given** a ten days' leave. – Ему дали десятидневный отпуск.
- Have** you **been shown** the documents? – Вам показали документы?
- They **were told** to wait. – Им велели подождать.

10. The verbs which take prepositional objects can form passive constructions of the following pattern: (the list of such verbs is given below)



- The film *was much spoken about*.
- The doctor *was sent for*.

Mind the place of the preposition in Russian and English:

RUSSIAN	ENGLISH
<p>Над НИМ часто смеются.</p> <p>О НЕМ много говорили.</p>	<p>He is often laughed at.</p> <p>He was much spoken about.</p>

The verbs taking prepositional objects. It should be remembered that not all of them retain this preposition in Russian.

A

to agree to/with	– соглашаться с чем-то
to agree on/upon	– прийти к соглашению
to arrive at an agreement	– прийти к соглашению
to arrive at a compromise	– прийти к компромиссу
to arrive at a conclusion	– прийти к заключению
to arrive at a decision	– прийти к решению
to call for/on	– зайти за кем-то
to count on	– надеяться, рассчитывать на кого-либо
to deal with	– иметь дело с
to find fault with	– придирааться к
to hear of	– слышать о
to insist on/upon	– настаивать на
to interfere with	– вмешиваться в, мешать
to laugh at	– смеяться над
to look after	– ухаживать за
to look at	– смотреть на
to make fun of	– насмехаться над
to pay attention to	– обращать внимание на
to put up with	– примириться с
to refer to	– ссылаться на
to rely on/upon	– полагаться на

to send for	– посылать за
to speak about/of, to	– говорить о, с
to take care of	– заботиться о
to talk about	– говорить о
to think of	– думать о
to write about	– писать о

B

to account for	– объяснять
to comment on	– комментировать
to listen to	– слушать
to look for	– искать
to lose sight of	– потерять из виду
to make a fool of	– дурачить
to make use of	– использовать
to operate on	– оперировать
to provide for	– снабжать
to put an end to	– положить конец
to take (no) notice of	– (не) замечать

- The boat *was soon lost sight of.*
- The child *should be taken care of.*
- His remark *was taken no notice of.*

§ 4. Ways of translating the Passive Voice into Russian.

There are three ways of translating the Passive Voice into Russian:

(a) by the verb *быть* + краткая форма причастия страдательного залога. In the Present the verb *быть* is not used.

(b) by verbs in *-ся*.

(c) by means of indefinite-personal constructions (неопределенно-личные предложения).

The last way of translating is possible only if the doer of the action is not mentioned.

Houses are built of stone.

Дома строятся из камня.

Дома строят из камня.

The house was built in 1932.

Дом (был) построен в 1932 году.

Дом построили в 1932 году.

The experiment was made by a famous scientist.

Опыт был произведен знаменитым ученым.

Опыт производился знаменитым ученым.

1

(A) Put the sentences into the Passive Voice where possible.

1. Someone will drive you to the airport.
.....
2. Goldfish live in fresh water.
.....
3. The Egyptians built pyramids.
.....
4. We walked 4 miles yesterday.
.....
5. They arrived at 7 last night.
.....
6. They informed me about it.
.....
7. I slept till 8.
.....
8. It's raining.
.....
9. You must obey the rules.
.....
10. He's sneezing again.
.....
11. You can buy videos like this anywhere.
.....
12. Someone has to write the history of this place.
.....
13. They have sold their car to pay the debts.
.....
14. They hold a meeting in the village hall once a week.
.....
15. They have proved that there is no life on the Moon.
.....
16. They owe a lot of money to the bank.
.....

4

(A, B) Write the sentences in the Passive.

Model:

(my sister/operate on/a distinguished surgeon) *My sister will be operated on by a distinguished surgeon.*

1. (a sound of violin/hear/in the hall)

2. (he/praise/his father/hard work)

3. (I/wake up/at 7 o'clock/my mother)

4. (this book/buy/a week ago)

5. (the picture/paint/great artist)

6. (the window/break/the other day)

7. (the letter/post/tomorrow)

8. (your report/discuss/next week)

9. (the time-table/change/in a week)

10. (the letter/bring/recently)

11. (milk/spill/just/Jack)

12. (the doctor/already/send for)

13. (the teacher/always/listen to/attentively)

14. (his speech/speak about/much)

15. (this article/refer to/often)

16. (the plan/agree upon)

17. (this house/live in/never)

5

(B) Read about the situation and write a sentence. Use the words in brackets.

Model:

1. He seldom keeps his promise. (he/can/rely on) *He can't be relied on.*
2. He's very sensitive. (he/not like/to laugh at) *He doesn't like to be laughed at.*

1. The child is very ill. (The doctor/send for)
.....
2. The old car is in excellent condition. (it/look after/well)
.....
3. He was speaking for two hours. (he/listen to/in silence)
.....
4. She is going into hospital tomorrow. (she/take good care of)
.....
5. This little boy is always dirty. (he/look after/property)
.....
6. She is always breaking things in the kitchen. (she/speak to/about her carelessness)
.....
7. He's a sensible man. (his advice/listen to/carefully)
.....
8. The dentist said her teeth were very bad. (they/take care of)
.....
9. He never broke a promise in his life. (he/can/rely on)
.....
10. Shakespeare was born more than 400 years ago. (he/look upon/as the greatest of English poets)
.....

10

(B, C) Open the brackets, using the correct form in the Passive Voice.

1. Dictionaries may not (use) at the examination.
2. This copy (not read)
The pages (not cut)
3. I'm not wearing my black shoes today. They (mend)
4. This room (use) only on special occasions.
5. Bicycles must not (leave) in the hall.
6. He was taken to hospital this afternoon, and (operate on) tomorrow morning.
7. The damaged buildings (reconstruct) now, the reconstruction (finish) by the end of the year.
8. The paintings (exhibit) till the end of the month.
9. She heard footsteps, she thought she (follow)
10. Normally this street (sweep) every day, but it (not sweep) yesterday.
11. She is very selfish, she (spoil) by her parents.
12. Thousands of new houses (build) every year.

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(B, C) Open the brackets. Use the necessary tenses in the Passive Voice.

1. The living-room (sweep) , (mop) and (dust) It is clean now.
2. We (tell) to wait because the man (question) in the room.
3. If he comes in you (find) looking through his papers.
4. For the first two minutes he (occupy) with eating; then as his appetite (quiet) , he took his time.
5. Why nothing (do) about it at the time?
6. You can't go in. She (interview) for the TV.
7. She promised that nothing (do) till he came back.
8. I had a most unpleasant feeling that I (watch)
9. She looked a different girl. Her face (wash) , her hair (comb) All traces of tears (remove)
10. We could still see the tracks where the car (drag) off the road.

(C) Put the verbs in brackets into the correct tense form in the Active or in the Passive.

1. What a mess! This room (redecorate)
..... ?
2. From the clink of dishes one could tell the supper (prepare)
3. The front door of his house (unlock) as he (leave)
..... it.
4. Mrs Fripp (come) to inform her that dinner already (serve)
5. His phrase (greet) by a strange laugh from a student who (sit) near the wall.
6. A note (bring) in, addressed to Eleanor, and (put) on the table to await her.
7. What a lovely bike! It (buy) yesterday?
8. To his knowing eyes the scene below easily (explain)
..... .
9. The door (shut) behind him.
10. Finally, his name (call) and the boy (push) forward to her.
11. The dishes (wash) yet ? Who (do)
..... it?
12. At lunch nothing (discuss) but the latest news.
13. "Will you work on this new job all your life?" The question (ask) with sincere interest.
14. She (tap) on the door. John (open) it.
15. Look! There's nothing here. Everything (take) away.