

# Active Voice, Passive Voice

There are two special forms for verbs called **voice**:

- 1-Active voice
- 2-Passive voice

The **active voice** is the "normal" voice. This is the voice that we use most of the time. You are probably already familiar with the active voice. In the active voice, the **object** receives the action of the verb:

.**active**    **subject**    **verb**    **object** > Cats eat fish

The **passive voice** is less usual. In the passive voice, the  
:**subject** receives the action of the verb

**Passive** - **subject – verb – object** •

.Fish are eaten by cats •

The **object** of the active verb becomes the **subject** of the •  
:passive verb

– **active** - **subject – verb – object** •

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**active** : Everybody drinks **water**

**passive** - **Water** is drunk by everybody •

## Passive Voice

The passive voice is less usual than the active voice. The active voice is the "normal" voice. But sometimes we need the passive voice. In this lesson we look at how to construct the passive voice, when to use it and how to conjugate it.

### Construction of the Passive Voice

The structure of the **passive voice** is very simple: subject + auxiliary verb (be) + main verb (past participle)

.The main verb is **always** in its past participle form

Look at these examples:

**subject auxiliary verb (to be) main verb (past participle)**

1-Water **is drunk** by everyone

2-100 people **are employed** by this company.

3-I **am paid** in euro.

4-We **are** not **paid** in dollars.

5-Are **they paid** in yen?

## Use of the Passive Voice

We use the passive when:

- 1- we want to make the **active object** more important
  - 2- we do not know the **active subject**
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- **subject**                  **verb**                  **object**
- give importance to **active object**
- (President Kennedy) **President Kennedy** was killed by Lee Harvey Oswald
- **.active subject unknown** : My wallet has been stolen.
- Note that we always use **by** to introduce the **passive object** (Fish are eaten **by** cats).

# Conjugation for the Passive Voice

We can form the passive in any tense. In fact, conjugation of verbs in the passive tense is rather easy, as the main verb is always in past participle form and the auxiliary verb is always **be**. To form the required tense, we conjugate the auxiliary verb. So, for example:

Look at this sentence:

1- He was killed **with** a gun.

Normally we use **by** to introduce the passive object. But the gun is not the active subject. **The gun did not kill him. He was killed by somebody with a gun.**

In **the active voice**, it would be: **Somebody killed him with a gun.**

The gun is the **instrument**. Somebody is the "agent" or "doer".

**present simple**: It **is** made

**present continuous**: It **is being** made

**present perfect**: It **has been** made

Infinitive	<b>to be</b> washed	
simple	present	It <b>is</b> washed.
	past	It <b>was</b> washed.
	future	It <b>will be</b> washed.
	conditional	It <b>would be</b> washed.
continuous	<b>present</b>	It <b>is being</b> washed.
	<b>past</b>	It <b>was being</b> washed.
	<b>future</b>	It <b>will be being</b> washed.
	<b>conditional</b>	.It <b>would be being</b> washed

perfect simple	present	It <b>has been</b> washed
	past	It <b>had been</b> washed.
	future	It <b>will have been</b> washed.
	conditional	It <b>would have been</b> washed.
perfect continuous	present	It <b>has been being</b> washed.
	past	It <b>had been being</b> washed.
	future	It <b>will have been being</b> washed
	conditional	It <b>would have been being</b> washed.



- Look at this sentence:
- 1- He was killed **with** a gun.
- Normally we use **by** to introduce the passive object. But the gun is not the active subject.
- The gun did not kill him. He was killed **by** somebody **with** a gun. In the active voice, it would be: Somebody killed him **with** a gun. The gun is the instrument. Somebody is the "agent" or "doer"

## Resource

<http://a4esl.org/a/g.html>

[http://www.1-language.com/englishcourse/unit58\\_grammar.htm](http://www.1-language.com/englishcourse/unit58_grammar.htm)

<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/ows/verbs.htm>

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