

## Changing from Active into Passive

The object of the active verb becomes the subject in the new sentence. The active verb changes into a passive form and the subject of the active verb becomes the agent. The agent (= person who does the action) is introduced with "by" or it is omitted.

	Subject	Verb	Object	Agent
Active	Bell	invented	the telephone.	
Passive	The telephone	was invented		by Bell.

We use **by + agent** to say who or what did the action. We use **with + instrument** or **material** to say what instrument or material the agent used.

*He was knocked down **by a lorry**. (The lorry did the action.)*

*The door was locked **by the man with** a key. (The key is the instrument the agent used.)*

*The cake was made **with flour, sugar and eggs**. (Flour, sugar and eggs are the materials the agent used.)*

We put the agent (=person who performs the action) into the passive only if it adds information. When the agent is unknown, unimportant or obvious from the context, it is omitted. Agents such as: someone, people, I, you etc are omitted.

*Macbeth was written **by Shakespeare**. (The agent is not omitted; it adds information.)*

*Somebody took my pen. ➡ My pen was taken (by somebody). (unknown agent; it is omitted.)*

After modal verbs (will, can, may etc) we use **be + past participle** or **have been + past participle**.

*They may close down the supermarket. ➡ The supermarket **may be closed down**.*

*They may have reported the bank robbery. ➡ The bank robbery **may have been reported**.*

With verbs that take two objects it is more usual to begin the passive sentence with the person.

*They sent a letter to him. ➡ **He was sent a letter**. (more usual) / **A letter was sent to him**. (less usual)*

Make, hear, see, help are followed by a **to - infinitive** in the passive.

*They made me apologise. ➡ **I was made to apologise**.*

The verbs believe, expect, feel, hope, know, report, say, think etc can be used in the following passive patterns:

a) **It + passive + that - clause** (impersonal construction)

b) **subject (person) + passive + to - infinitive** (personal construction)

People say she is rich.

**It is said that she is rich.**

**She is said to be rich.**

### 119 Turn from Active into Passive.

1. An expert is restoring the antique car. ... *The antique car is being restored by an expert.*
2. Steven Spielberg has directed a lot of successful films. ....
3. The judge has fined him £300. ....
4. A number of reporters will meet the professor at the airport. ....
5. A famous designer is going to redecorate the President's house. ....
6. The Romans founded Bath in the first century A.D. ....
7. A nightmare woke Mary up. ....
8. The Muslims celebrate Ramadan. ....
9. Van Gogh painted "Sunflowers". ....
10. Astronauts are exploring space. ....

### 120 Turn from Active into Passive. Omit the agent where it can be omitted.

1. They kill elephants for ivory. ... *Elephants are killed for ivory. (omitted)*
2. Homer wrote the "Iliad". ....
3. People chop down a lot of trees every year. ....



4. The government will introduce new measures against crime. ....
5. Someone has burgled Ann's house. ....
6. She offered me a cup of tea. ....
7. They check passports at Passport Control. ....
8. A million people visit the cathedral every year. ....
9. Someone has stolen Mike's bicycle. ....

### 121 Rewrite the following passage in the Passive.

Somebody gave me a goat for my birthday last year. They had bought it from a farm down the road. We keep it tied to a tree in our garden. My husband normally looks after it, but last week his company sent him abroad on business. A few days later, our neighbour called me to the window. I hadn't tied the goat up properly. The goat was eating her washing!



### 122 Fill in "by" or "with".

1. The window was broken ..with..... a hammer.
2. He was knocked down ..... a car.
3. The lion was shot ..... a rifle.
4. That novel was written ..... D. H. Lawrence.
5. The garden was dug ..... a spade.
6. The city was attacked ..... the enemy.
7. The pudding was made ..... fruit and chocolate.
8. He was hit ..... a handbag.
9. The picture was painted ..... Jackson Pollack.
10. The house was built ..... wood and bricks.

### 123 Fill in the correct form of the verbs.

A florist is taking a telephone order from a customer.

Customer : Hello, I'd like to order some flowers, please.

Florist : Certainly, sir. When would you like them 1) *to be delivered*... (deliver)?

Customer : Can they 2) ..... (deliver) on Monday?

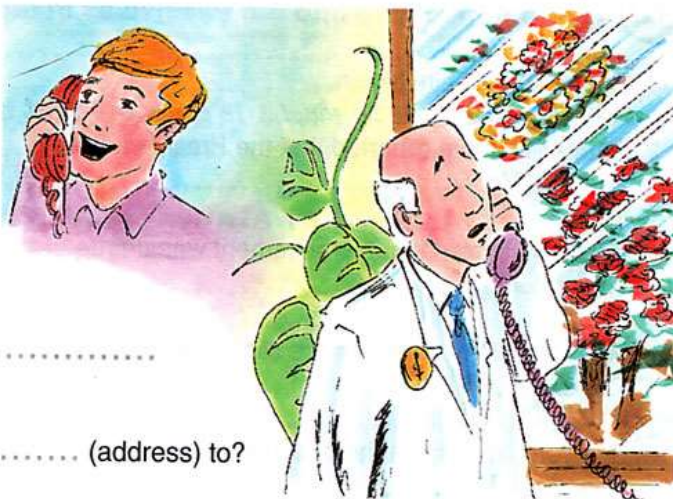
Florist : Oh, I'm sorry, sir. No flowers can 3) ..... (send) on Monday because it's a bank holiday. The shop will be closed.

Customer : Oh, can they 4) ..... (send) on Friday then?

Florist : Certainly, sir. Where should they 5) ..... (take) to?

Customer : 47, Hanson Road, Croydon.

Florist : Okay, and who should they 6) ..... (address) to?



### 124 Turn the following sentences into the Passive.

1. Scientists might discover a cure for cancer. ... *A cure for cancer might be discovered.* .....
2. Someone should help the old woman across the street. ....
3. They might have arrested the escaped prisoner. ....
4. They should have provided more food at the reception. ....
5. They ought to warn the public about him. ....