

The Passive Voice

What is the passive voice?

It's a way of focusing on the action more than who does it:

- Mrs Smith broke her leg. (subject + verb + object)
- Mrs Smith's leg **was broken**. (object + verb)

Purposes of the passive voice:

Purpose	Example
to focus on an action and not the 'doer'	<p>The bridge near my house was built ten years ago.</p> <p>The council built the bridge near my house ten years ago.</p>
because we don't know who the 'doer' is	<p>My car was stolen last night.</p> <p>Thieves stole my car last night.</p>
obvious who the 'doer' is - authority	<p>Smoking is not allowed anywhere on this train.</p> <p>The train company does not allow smoking anywhere on this train.</p> <p>Smoking is prohibited in indoor public places in the UK.</p> <p>Active: The government prohibits smoking in indoor public places in the UK.</p>
to hide the 'doer'	<p>Ok, something rude was said.</p> <p>Hussain said something rude.</p> <p>Mistakes have been made.</p> <p>We have made mistakes.</p>

Including the subject:

We introduce the subject/agent by using the preposition 'by':

My appendix was removed **by** a surgeon. (agent = subject)

Golden rules for passive:

- 1) *The passive ALWAYS has be + past participle*
- 2) *The passive can be used in multiple tenses*
- 3) *When we change tenses, we change 'be'*
- 4) *When we change tenses, we do not change 'past participle'*
- 5) *We introduce the subject/agent with 'by'*
- 6) *We have to reflect the 'object + verb agreement'*

The Passive in Different Tenses

Tense	Form	Example
present simple	is / are / am / be + past participle	The classes at SET are taught by Alain and Paul.
present continuous	is being are being am being	This class is being taught by Paul
past simple	was / were + past participle	The windows were broken .
past continuous	was /were + being + past participle	My food was being cooked while I sat in the restaurant.
present perfect	has / have + been + past participle	My bike has been stolen !
present perfect continuous		Don't use it!
past perfect	had + been + past participle	I enjoyed my food. It had been cooked well by my mum.
past perfect continuous		Don't use it!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present continuous be + verb + ing + be + past participle = be + being + past participle • Past continuous was/were + verb + ing + be + past participle = was/were + being + past participle • Present perfect has/have + past participle+ be + past participle = has/have + been + past participle • Past perfect had + past participle+ be + past participle = had + been + past participle 		

Exercise 1

Use the correct form of the passive to make passive sentences:

1. My homework was really difficult. Thank god for your brother!
2. I **am training** for the Olympics, with the help of my trainer, John Adams.
3. My brother is cleaning the windows. So they can't be fixed right now
4. The alarm went off when we were in the museum with the guide!

Exercise 2

Choose if we need passive or active. Be aware of the tense!

get waste challenging keep prepare take have to

I for this exam for a long time. It is! I at night by it! It involves a lot of different aspects of mathematics and I know that I will **have to** be really focused in order to the result I need. It will a lot of concentration to make sure I don't a single second in the exam!

monitor have (2) operate observe keep realise bring hit

A man to our ER department by an ambulance two months ago. He by a truck and he a range of injuries. We he severe internal bleeding, so we He in for two weeks. He and round the clock.

affect experience worsen diagnose anticipate use

Mrs Johnson with alopecia areata three years ago. Since then sheintermittent balding. Various parts of the body Both topical creams and steroid injectionssince her diagnosis, with some success. At this stage, there is no indication that the conditionand therefore, progression to alopecia totalis

occur	stimulate	assume	refer	cause (4)	have (2)
-------	-----------	--------	-------	-----------	----------

Plethora to a ruddy, 'weather beaten' facial appearance where the skin an unusually red or bluish appearance. Facial plethora usually by an abnormally high haemoglobin concentration. This.....usually by chronic cyanotic lung disease in which hypoxia erythropoietin. Polycythaemia rubra vera is a myeloproliferative disorder that very high haemoglobin levels. Plethora in the absence of hypoxic cyanosis. The conjunctiva a characteristic 'plum' colour and on fundoscopy the increased blood viscosity the venules to a thickened 'sausage-shaped' appearance.

Answers

1. My homework was really difficult. Thank god for your brother!

- Your brother **helped** me with my homework.
- I **was helped** by your brother with my homework.

2. I am training for the Olympics, with the help of my trainer, John Adams.

John Adams is helping me with my training for the Olympics. John is training me for the Olympics.

I **am being helped** with my training for the Olympics by John Adams.

I **am being trained** for the Olympics by John Adams.

3. My brother is cleaning the windows. So they can't be fixed right now.

- The windows **cannot be fixed** right now because they **are being cleaned**.

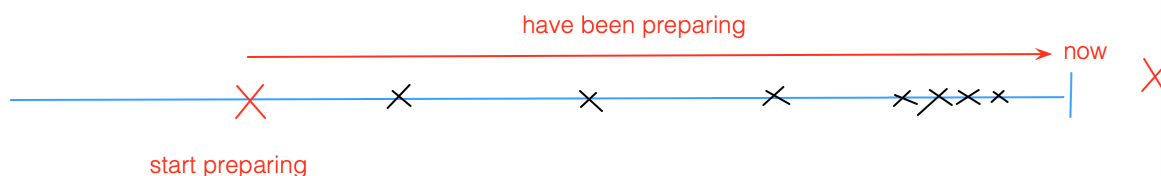
4. The alarm went off when we were in the museum with the guide!

- The alarm went off when we **were being guided** round the museum!

Exercise 2

get	waste	challenging	keep	prepare	take	have to
-----	-------	-------------	------	---------	------	---------

I **have been preparing** for this exam for a long time. It is **challenging** ! I **have been kept / am kept** awake at night by it! It involves a lot of different aspects of mathematics and I know that I will **have to** be really focused in order to **get** the result I need. It will **take** a lot of concentration to make sure I don't **waste** a single second in the exam!



monitor	have (2)	operate	observe	keep	realise	bring
---------	----------	---------	---------	------	---------	-------

A man **was brought** to our ER department by an ambulance two months ago. He **had been hit** by a truck and he **had** a range of injuries. We **realised** he **had** severe internal bleeding, so we **operated** . He **was kept in** for two weeks. He **was observed** and **monitored** round the clock.

affect	experience	worsen	diagnose	anticipate	use
--------	------------	--------	----------	------------	-----

Mrs Johnson **was diagnosed** with alopecia areata three years ago. **Since** then she **has been experiencing / has experienced** intermittent balding. Various parts of the body **are affected / have been affected**. Both topical creams and steroid injections **have been used** since her diagnosis, with some success. At this stage, there is no indication that the condition **has got worse / has worsened/ is worsening** and therefore, progression to alopecia totalis **is not anticipated**.

occur	stimulate	assume	refer	cause (4)	have (2)
-------	-----------	--------	-------	-----------	----------

Plethora **refers** to a ruddy, 'weather beaten' facial appearance where the skin **has** an unusually red or bluish appearance. Facial plethora **is** usually **caused by** an abnormally high haemoglobin concentration. This **is** usually **caused by** chronic cyanotic lung disease in which hypoxia **stimulates** erythropoietin. Polycythaemia rubra vera is a myeloproliferative disorder that **causes** very high haemoglobin levels. Plethora **occurs** in the absence of hypoxic cyanosis. The conjunctiva **has** a characteristic 'plum' colour and on fundoscopy the increased blood viscosity **causes** the venules to **assume** a thickened 'sausage-shaped' appearance.