




## The Passive

What is the passive?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Useful for OET – it sounds a bit ‘colder’ – more formal, generally.</li> <li>• Focus on the action – remove the subject</li> <li>• It affects verbs</li> <li>• It is a ‘voice’ not a tense</li> </ul> <p><b>Every time you use a verb you choose:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. active / passive</li> <li>2. tense</li> <li>3. subject/ object + verb agreement</li> </ol> <p><b>Remember:</b></p> <p><b>Subject:</b> a noun which does an action. / <b>Object:</b> a noun which receives an action</p> <p><b>Active:</b> Chandimali <u>ate</u> rice.</p> <p><b>Passive:</b> Rice <u>was eaten</u> by Chandimali.</p>	
to focus on an action and not the ‘doer’	hurt / Mrs Smith / car accident Mrs Smith had a car accident and hurt herself.  Mrs Smith <u>was hurt</u> in a car accident.
because we don’t know who the ‘doer’	late last night / attack / Mr Smith  Mr Smith <u>was attacked</u> late last night.
obvious who the ‘doer’ is	doctor / prescribe / paracetamol / Mr Smith Mr Smith <u>was prescribed</u> paracetamol. – indirect object  Paracetamol <u>was prescribed</u> for Mr Smith. – direct object

**Golden rules for the passive:**

- 1) **be + past participle**
- 2) the passive can be in multiple tenses
- 3) The passive changes in multiple tenses: **verb 'be' always** changes.....
- 4) ...but the **past participle never** changes. It's always at the end of the passive.
- 5) add the subject by using 'by'
- 6) verb 'be' is also affected by subject/object + verb agreement

**Verb forms**

infinitive	verb 2 / past simple	verb 3 / past participle
fly	flew	flown
eat	ate	eaten
know	knew	known
go	went	gone
undergo	underwent	undergone
reg: visit	visited	visited
put	put	put
reg: scare	scared	scared
hurt	hurt	hurt

### Confusing things to watch out for:

- **Adjectives:** verb 3 / past participle is often used as an adjective

- I am scared. – adjective
- My sister was scared by a dog. – passive verb

- **Multiple Objects:**

**direct:** the action happens to the noun

**indirect:** a noun benefits from an action done to another noun

*Some verbs it doesn't matter:*

- Mr Smith was prescribed...
- Paracetamol was prescribed..

*Some verbs it does matter:*

- A catheter was inserted .....
- ~~Mr Smith was inserted...~~

- **Position of 'by' & prepositional phrases in sentence:**

**Active:** My GP advised **me** to lose weight.

**Passive:** I was advised to lose weight **by my GP**.


**Passive:** I was advised **by my GP** to lose weight.

**My general rule:** Although it's possible to put it in different places, put 'by' after the prepositional phrase.

### The Passive in different tenses:

Tense	Passive Form	Example
Present Simple + infinitive	am / is / are + past participle  modal + be + past participle	I <b>am helped</b> by the teacher. He <b>is helped</b> by the teacher. They <b>are helped</b> by the teacher.
Present Continuous  be + verb + ing	am/is/are + being + past participle	My brother is cleaning <b>the windows</b> . The windows <b>are being cleaned</b> by my brother.
Past Simple + past simple	was / were + past participle	Mr Smith <b>was helped</b> by the doctor. Mr and Mrs Smith <b>were helped</b> by the doctor.
Past Continuous	was/were + being + past participle	The windows <b>were being cleaned</b> by my brother. <b>was /were + verb + ing + be + past participle</b> <b>was /were + being + past participle</b>
Present Perfect Simple  has/have + past participle		The doctor <b>has told</b> Mr Smith about his diagnosis. Mr Smith <b>has been told</b> about his diagnosis by the doctor. <b>has/have + past participle + be + past participle</b> <b>has/have + been + past participle</b>  We use this commonly to say in requests what has happened recently – it affects the present
Present Perfect Continuous		<b>has/have + been + verb+ing + be</b> <b>has/have + been + being</b>  A doctor <b>has been reviewing</b> Paul's mother. Paul's mother <b>has been being reviewed</b> by a doctor.



		<p>will + be + verb + ing + be + past participle</p> <p>will + be + being + past participle</p>
<p>Future Perfect Simple</p> <p>will have + past participle</p>		<p>Elif <u>will have passed</u> her exam by November.</p>  <p>will have + past participle + be + past participle</p> <p>will have + been + past participle</p> <p>Elif's exam <u>will have been passed</u> by November.</p>
<p>Future Perfect Continuous</p>		<p><del>will have been being reviewed</del></p>

### Exercise 1

Use the correct form of the passive to make passive sentences. Consider the tense – it's not always obvious!

1. I am training for the Olympics, with the help of my trainer, John Adams. (train)
2. My blood test results are with the GP. I'm not sure what she'll find. (check)
3. My physio exercises were really difficult. Thank god for the community nurse. (help)
4. I need a blood test. It's the GP's responsibility to organise it. (arrange)
5. Zofran has helped with my nausea. (reduce)
6. The nurse offered to adjust my crutches. She is helping now. (adjust)
7. I have osteoporosis in my hip. My operation is in the next two weeks. (30<sup>th</sup> April/replace)

## Exceptions

Some nouns we commonly use in the active even though they feel like they should be in the passive:

- blood pressure
- diet
- temperature
- cholesterol levels
- blood sugar levels

We often use these verbs:

increase / decrease

go up / go down

improve / worsen

- My blood pressure went up last year.
- My blood pressure has decreased over the past six months.

## Exercise 2

1. My blood sugar levels are lower now because of the new medication I have been taking. (improve)
2. He doesn't have fever anymore due to his antibiotic treatment. (temperature)
3. I'm worried about his cholesterol levels. (increase)

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## Answers

### Exercise 1

1. I am training for the Olympics, with the help of my trainer, John Adams. (train)

I **am being trained** by John Adams.

2. My blood test results are with the GP. I'm not sure what she'll find. (check)

My blood test results **are being checked** by my GP.

3. My physio exercises were really difficult. Thank god for the community nurse. (help)

*I was helped by my community nurse to do my physio.*

*I was helped with my physio exercises, which were really difficult, by the community nurse*

4. I need a blood test. It's the GP's responsibility to organise it. (arrange)

My blood test **will be arranged** by the GP.

A blood test **will have been arranged** by the GP. – confusing because we don't have a time in the future for it to happen before

5. Zofran has helped with my nausea. (reduce)

My nausea **has been reduced** by Zofran.

6. The nurse offered to adjust my crutches. She is helping now. (adjust)

My crutches **are being adjusted** by the nurse.

7. I have osteoporosis in my hip. My operation is in the next two weeks. (30<sup>th</sup> April/replace)

My hip **will have been replaced** by 30<sup>th</sup> April.



## Exercise 2

1. My blood sugar levels are lower now because of the new medication I have been taking.  
(improve)

My blood sugar levels have improved due to his new medication.

His new medication has improved his blood sugar levels.

~~His blood sugar levels have been improved~~

2. He doesn't have fever anymore due to his antibiotic treatment. (temperature)

His temperature has dropped.

3. I'm worried about his cholesterol levels. (increase)

His cholesterol levels have increased.