

18th November
OET Writing – Passive Voice

Starter

How could we change this sentence to focus on Ms Benthos?

The doctor advised Ms Benthos to take her medication.

Ms Benthos was advised to take her medication (by her doctor).

To make the passive voice, we use...

Subject + be + past participle (3rd form)

If we want to change the tense, we change the verb...

To be

When do we use the passive voice?

When we don't know who did the action:

ACTIVE: Someone stole my bike.

PASSIVE: My bike was stolen.

When the 'doer' of the action is obvious or clear:

ACTIVE: Italians make pasta in Italy.

PASSIVE: Pasta is made in Italy.

To change the focus of the sentence:

ACTIVE: Leonardo Da Vinci painted the Mona Lisa.

PASSIVE: The Mona Lisa was painted by Leonardo Da Vinci.

When we use the passive voice...

We can use the preposition 'by' to give the agent of the action (the 'doer'):

"The Mona Lisa was painted by Leonardo Da Vinci"

However, in a lot of passive sentences, the agent is irrelevant:

"My bike was stolen by somebody"

What tenses or forms are used in these passive sentences?

1. Computers are used in most offices
Present simple – are/am/is + past participle
2. Your room is being cleaned at the moment
Present continuous – are/am/is + being + past participle
3. The thieves have been detained by the police
Present perfect simple – have/has + been + past participle
4. *Avatar* was directed by James Cameron
Past simple – was/were + past participle
5. The road was being dug up as I drove past
Past continuous – was/were + being + past participle
6. The man had been caught stealing money
Past perfect simple – had + been + past participle
7. You will be asked twenty questions during the interview
Future simple – will be + past participle
8. I'm going to be given a present by my colleagues
Going to (planned future) – are/am/is + going to + be + past participle
(Active = My colleagues are going to give me a present)
9. I used to be helped but now I can do things on my own
Infinitive form – to be + past participle
10. I hate being spoken to like a child
Gerund form – being + past participle
11. Criminals must be punished
Bare infinitive form – be + past participle