

## VP\PASSIVE VOICE

❖ It is used when the subject is unknown or is not required to be mentioned. In informal spoken English, 'somebody'; 'someone'; 'something'; sometimes 'we'; 'you' are mostly used in active voice form of sentence when the subject is unknown.

❖ It is mostly preferred in formal academic writing. 'It' is used when the subject is a word like 'Somebody, everybody' and the object is a that clause :

He **is implementing a new experiment** now →

**A new experiment is being implemented** now. (more formal)

Somebody **believes** that the experience will fail →

**It is believed** that the experience will fail. (formal)

❖ Also, it is preferred to put the subject at the end when it is long:

**Don's decision to give up his job and move to Sydney** surprised me→

I **was surprised by Don's decision to give up his job and move to Sydney**

❖ The general structure of passive voice is:

S (which was the O)+be+ p. p (formal)

S (which was the O)+get+ p. p (informal)

❖ The passive in different tenses has the following forms of structure:

- (simple present): I **write** letters→ Letters **are written**

- (simple past): I **wrote** letters→ Letters **were written**

- (continuous present): I **am writing** letters→ Letters **are being written**

- (continuous past): I **was writing** letters→ Letters **were being written**

- (perfect present): I **have written** a letter→ A letter **has been written**

- (perfect past): I **had written** letters→ Letters **had been written**

- (modal aux): I **will (can) write** letters→ Letters **will (can) be written**

❖ Some further notes:

1- Verbs (such as: award, hand, lend, offer, send, throw, tell, ask, read, teach) followed by two Objects have two different forms of passive:

I **gave Sally a letter**→ A letter was given to Sally,

→ Sally was given a letter

2- If the structure of the sentence is not true, then there is no passive:

✗ He explained **me** the problem (no passive)

✓ He explained the problem to me → The problem was explained to me  
Other verbs that are followed by one object only are: announce, demonstrate, describe, introduce, mention, propose, report, suggest)

3- (S+V+O+Co) has only the following form of passive:

you make **her** their representative → She is made their representative  
Other verbs that are followed by one object +Co are: appoint, declare, elect, nominate, vote, name, call, title)

4- V+O+V(bare infinitive):

He has helped **her go** forward → She has been helped **to go** forward.  
Other verbs that are followed by one object+ V (bare) are: make, feel, hear, observe, see, let)

5- Phrasal or multiple word verbs (like: look for, carry out, disapprove of, hold over, talk down,...etc.) can have a passive form:

She **looks after** her child → Her child **is looked after** by her.

A note: - Some phrasal verbs can have no passive form when having certain meanings, as in:

**(brush up on=revise, cast back=try to remember, come up again=encounter, get down=write, take after=resemble, call up=telephone, call back=telephone, let in=allow rain in, put out+ a hand\arm\foot\tongue)**

6- S+ V+ O+ to+ V:

Mr. Price learned Peter to write well → Peter was learned to write well

But sometimes, there are more than one option:

We expect **the government to propose changes to the taxation system:**

→ Changes to the taxation system are expected to be proposed. Or:

→ The government is expected to propose changes to the taxation system.

Other verbs that are followed by one object+ to+ V are: advise, allow, ask, believe, consider, expect, feel, instruct, mean, order, require, tell, understand.

7- S+ V+ to+ V+ O:

Supermarket started to sell fresh pasta only in the 1990 →

Fresh pasta started to be sold only in the 1990.

Others verbs are: appear, begin, come, continue, seem, tend, agree, aim, arrange, attempt, hope, refuse, want.

8- V+O+-ing:

They saw the monkey climbing→ the monkey was seen climbing

Other verbs that are followed by one object+ V-ing are: bring, catch, hear, find, keep, notice, observe, send, show.

9- Some verbs do not allow the passive form like: contain, lack, befall, eludes, afford, have, cost, part.

10- Also, the structures:

S+V+C (or Adv.), S+V+ reflexive pronoun (myself, herself..) cannot be changed into passive voice form of structure.

He saw himself. (no passive),

I am a student (no passive),

I play well (no passive),

It costs three dinars (no passive)