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**Passive Voice** is used when the speaker wants to focus not on the subject but on the action itself and the object receiving this action.



via <https://multiurok.ru/files/the-past-simple-passive.html>

Compare the sentences:

- *Millions of people play mobile games every day (focus on “millions of people”).*
- *Mobile games **are played** by millions of people every day (focus on “mobile games are played”).*
- *Butter **is made** from milk.*
- *The telephone **was invented** by Alexander Bell.*

When transforming active voice into passive voice, the subject and the object of the sentence change places. Often, the preposition ‘by’ is added before the subject. Look at this picture:



via <https://writingcenter.ashford.edu/active-vs-passive-voice>

On the left (**active voice**):

- the subject of the sentence performs the action;
- the person/thing performing the action is named before the verb.

On the right (**passive voice**):

- the action is performed **on** the subject, the subject receives the action;
- the object acted upon is named before the verb.

## How to form Passive Voice

Positive statements with passive constructions are built using various forms of the verb 'be' (*is, are, were, etc.*) + the **Past Participle** form of the verb:

- *The office **is cleaned** every day.*
- *I **was born** in 1980.*
- *These castles **were built** by our ancestors.*

## Negative statements in Passive Voice

To make negative statements with passive constructions, use:

**subject + form of 'be' + not + Past Participle**

Note: For regular verbs, this is the “-ed” form of the verb. For the list of Past Participle forms of irregular verbs see our article on [irregular verbs](#).

- *I **wasn't offered** any job.*
- *That bird **isn't usually seen** in our region.*
- *They **weren't invited** to the party last Saturday.*

## Questions in Passive Voice

To make questions with passive constructions, use:

**(Question word) + form of 'be' + subject + Past Participle**

- *Where **were** you **born**?*
- ***Was** anybody **injured** in the accident?*
- ***Were** you **paid** when you finished your work?*

## When to use Passive Voice

We use the Passive Voice when:

- We do not know who did the action = *'The window was broken.'* (we don't know who broke it).
- It is not important who did the action = *'Lunch is served at 2 pm.'* (it is not important

who serves lunch).

- It is obvious who did the action = '*Wheat is grown in this field.*' (obviously, farmers grow the wheat).
- The object receiving the action or the action itself is more important than the doer of the action = '*The box was carried by the woman.*' (the focus is on the box).

In this video from mmmEnglish, you'll find the explanation and many examples of passive constructions:

See also:

[Present Simple Passive](#)

[Past Simple Passive](#)

[Present Perfect Passive](#)