

RESOURCE VIDEO

PASSIVE VOICE

■ WHEN DO WE USE THE PASSIVE VOICE?

When the object is more important than the subject or when we don't know who did the action. The passive voice can be used in both formal and informal language.

1. When the object is more important than the subject. (We want to give importance to the object of the sentence.)

Active sentence:

Mary made the birthday cake. (Mary is the focus)

Passive sentence:

The birthday cake was made by Mary. (The cake is the focus)

2. When we don't know who did the action

The bank was robbed this morning. (We don't know who robbed it)

A man was injured during the race. (We don't know who was injured or how it happened)

The Passive Voice is used in academic writing and in journalism when the writer wants to remain unbiased.

Structure:

Affirmative **Active:** Subject + verb + object

Affirmative **Passive:** Subject + BE + Past Participle + By + Object

Johnny reads the newspaper every day. (active)

The newspaper is read by Johnny every day. (passive)

The children take piano lessons. (active)

Piano lessons are taken by the children. (passive)

The passive voice can be used in every verb tense!

Examples:

1. simple present

Active: The children play soccer.

Passive: Soccer is played by the children.

2. simple past

Active: The children played soccer.

Passive: Soccer was played by the children.

3. past – used to

Active: The children used to play soccer.

Passive: Soccer used to be played by the children.

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4. future

Active: The children will play soccer.

Passive: Soccer will be played by the children.

Active: The children are going to play soccer.

Passive: Soccer is going to be played by the children.

5. present perfect

Active: The children have played soccer for many years.

Passive: Soccer has been played by the children for many years.

6. past perfect

Active: The children had played soccer before they ate lunch.

Passive: Soccer had been played by the children before they ate lunch.

7. future perfect

Active: The children will have played soccer for 16 months by this time next year.

Passive: Soccer will have been played by the children for 16 months by this time next year.

8. modals

Active: The children should/could/would/can/may/might play soccer.

Passive: Soccer should/could/would/can/may/might be played by the children.

The passive voice can also be used in the continuous tense.

Structure:

Subject + am/is/are + being + past participle

Subject was/were + being + past participle

9. present continuous

Active: The children are playing soccer.

Passive: Soccer is being played by the children.

10. past continuous

Active: The children were playing soccer.

Passive: Soccer was being played by the children.

Bonus:

*To be born (only used in the passive voice)

Ex: I was born on February 7th.