

UNIVERSITÀ DI CAGLIARI



**CORSO DI LAUREA IN ECONOMIA E GESTIONE
AZIENDALE**

CORSO DI LAUREA IN ECONOMIA E FINANZA
LINGUA INGLESE

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THE PASSIVE VOICE

Let's look at this sentence:

- *I drank two cups of coffee.*

→ This is an **active** sentence and it has the subject first, followed by the verb, and finally the object

Various other ways to form sentences. One of them:

→ **Passive** form: it puts the object first

- *Two cups of coffee were drunk* (we can add '*by me*' if we want).

How to make the passive in English?

Object + verb 'to be' + past participle

THE PASSIVE VOICE

We delivered the goods yesterday. → **Active**

SUBJECT

OBJECT

The goods were delivered yesterday → **Passive**

SUBJECT

- The object of an active sentence can become the subject of the passive form.

THE PASSIVE VOICE

➤ We can not change an active into a passive if there is no object:

The cost of tags has plunged.

➤ We use *BY* to refer to the agent only if it adds value to the sentence.

The goods were delivered yesterday by us.

THE PASSIVE VOICE

- We make the passive voice with the verb to be + past participle

Journalists write the news – Active

*The news is written **by** journalists* - Passive

- Exercise: take the sentence “**the news is written by journalists**” and put it into as many passive voice tenses as you can.

THE PASSIVE VOICE

- The news is written by journalists – PRESENT SIMPLE
- The news was written by journalists – PAST SIMPLE
- The news has been written by journalists – PRESENT PERFECT
- The news is being written by journalists – PRESENT CONTINUOUS
- The news was being written by journalists – PAST CONTINUOUS
- The news will be written – FUTURE SIMPLE
- The news must be written – MODALS
- The news is going to be written by journalists – GOING TO
- The news had been written by journalists – PAST PERFECT

THE PASSIVE VOICE

TENSE	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
Present Simple	I make a cake	A cake is made
Present Contin.	I'm making a cake	A cake is being made .
Past Simple	I made a cake.	A cake was made .
Past Continuous	I was making a cake.	A cake was being made .
Present Perfect	I have made a cake	A cake has been made .
Past Perfect	I had made a cake.	A cake had been made .
Future Simple	I will make a cake.	A cake will be made .
Future be going to	I'm going to make a cake.	A cake is going to be made .
Modal	I must make a cake.	A cake must be made .
Modal Perfect	I should have made a cake.	A cake should have been made .

THE PASSIVE VOICE - When should we use the passive?

- 1) When we want to change the focus of the sentence:
 - *The Mona Lisa was painted by Leonardo da Vinci.*
- 2) When who or what causes the action is unknown or unimportant or obvious or 'people in general':
 - He was arrested.*
 - My bike has been stolen.*
 - The road is being repaired.*
 - The form can be obtained from the post office.*

THE PASSIVE VOICE - When should we use the passive?

- 3) In factual or scientific writing:

The chemical is placed in a test tube and the data entered into the computer.

- 4) In formal writing instead of using someone/ people/ they:

The brochure will be finished next month.

- 5) In order to put the new information at the end of the sentence to improve style:

Three books are used regularly in the class. The books were written by Dr. Bell.

- 6) When the subject is very long:

I was surprised by how well the students did in the test.

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Passives

Passives have the following uses.

- when the agent is unknown or unimportant
*The stock was delivered to us this morning.
The shelves haven't been upgraded yet.
The tags can be switched off by a kill switch.*
- systems and processes
*The stock is scanned as it enters the warehouse.
The figures are being finalised at the moment.*
- formal reports and notices
*It is recommended that smart tags be introduced.
The issue was raised by the company's auditors.*
- reporting unconfirmed information
*The CEO is said to be in favour of smart tags.
They are thought to be cheaper than barcodes.*

THE PASSIVE VOICE

Verbs with two objects

- Some verbs that have two objects can make two different active sentences, and so two different passive sentences, too. For example, the verb 'give':
 - *Active: He gave me the book / He gave the book to me.*
 - You can choose either of the two objects to be the subject of the passive sentence.
 - *Passive: I was given the book (by him) / The book was given to me (by him).*
- Other verbs like this are: ask, offer, teach, tell, lend, promise, sell, throw.

THE PASSIVE VOICE

The passive in subordinate clauses

You can make the passive in a subordinate clause that has a subject and a normal conjugated verb. This is really the same as a normal passive.

- *Active: I thought that Mary had kissed John.*
- *Passive: I thought that John had been kissed by Mary.*
- *Active: He knew that people had built the church in 1915.*
- *Passive: He knew that the church had been built in 1915.*

THE PASSIVE VOICE

You can also make the passive using a passive gerund or a passive infinitive in the same place as a normal gerund or infinitive.

- *The child loves being cuddled.*
- *She would like to be promoted.*

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Language check

Passives

The passive is formed with the appropriate tense of the verb *be* + the past participle of the main verb.

... smart shelves which are fitted with tag readers.

Smart tags can be scanned automatically.

As a result, shipment errors and theft will be reduced.

– We use the passive form when the agent is unimportant.

The tags **are currently being piloted** in major supermarkets (*by Gillette*).

– The passive is often used in formal reports and notices.

It has been established that shipment errors will be greatly reduced.



For more information, see page 161.

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Practice

1 Write the following sentences in the passive. Do not include the agent if it is not important.

- 1 Consumer groups have brought the issue of consumer privacy to light.
The issue of consumer privacy has been brought to light.

- 2 Manufacturers will install smart tags on all sorts of products.

- 3 Consumer groups are preparing petitions against the use of smart tags.

- 4 Lorries and trucks transport raw materials to the factories.

- 5 Supermarkets are considering eliminating checkouts altogether.

- 6 Consumers should try to access more information about smart tags.

Practice

1 Write the following sentences in the passive. Do not include the agent if it is not important.

- 1 Consumer groups have brought the issue of consumer privacy to light.
The issue of consumer privacy has been brought to light.
- 2 Manufacturers will install smart tags on all sorts of products.
2 Smart tags will be installed on all sorts of products.
- 3 Consumer groups are preparing petitions against the use of smart tags.
3 Petitions are being prepared (by consumer groups) against the use of smart tags.
- 4 Lorries and trucks transport raw materials to the factories.
4 Raw materials are transported (by lorry and truck / by lorries and trucks) to the factories.
- 5 Supermarkets are considering eliminating checkouts altogether.
5 The elimination of checkouts is being considered by supermarkets.
- 6 Consumers should try to access more information about smart tags.¹⁶
6 More information about smart tags should be accessed by consumers.

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2 Complete the text with either the appropriate active or passive form of the following verbs.

make find buy load use scan track remove access
send transport insert throw away



During one of the last stages of production, tag readers ¹ *are inserted* into the packaging of certain items destined for a well-known supermarket chain.

They are then ² _____ onto trucks and ³ _____ to the supermarkets.

A young woman ⁴ _____ one of these items and ⁵ _____ her credit card to pay for it. Information about her, such as her name, address and a list of all the items in her shopping trolley ⁶ _____ into the shop's computer system.

She then ⁷ _____ various

purchases in different stores, paying each time with the same credit card.

What she doesn't realise is that all her movements ⁸ _____ and that until the packaging of the tagged item ⁹ _____ and ¹⁰ _____ information about everywhere she goes, everything she buys and how much she is willing to pay for items ¹¹ _____ easily by marketers and retailers.

Soon, a letter ¹² _____ to her suggesting that all the products she prefers to buy from high street retailers ¹³ _____ in the supermarket at more competitive prices.

THE PASSIVE VOICE – pag. 124

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- 2) Loaded
- 3)(are) transported
- 4) Buys
- 5) Uses
- 6) Is scanned
- 7) Makes
- 8) Are (being) tracked
- 9) Is removed
- 10) (is) thrown away
- 11) Is accessed / can be accessed
- 12) Is sent
- 13) Are found / can be found

THE PASSIVE VOICE

- 1. It's a well-known fact that blue glass _____ in Bristol.
- **A** is making **b** is made **c** has made **d** be make
- 2. Every day our class _____ by the same three teachers at our school.
- **A** teaches **b** is teaching **c** is taught **d** taught
- 3. Eri's electronic dictionary was _____ in china. It is the latest model.
- **A** make **b** making **c** makes **d** made
- 4. Some of the students in our class _____ given a new map of the city last week. It shows the skating rink and the cinema that we sometimes go to.
- **A** is **b** are **c** was **d** were
- 5. This year, more than ten million turkeys _____ in the united kingdom on christmas day.
- **A** are going to be eating **b** are going to be eaten **c** are going to eaten **d** are going to eating
- 6. This book _____ from recycled paper so it is good for the environment.
- **A** was making **b** made **c** is made **d** is make

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- 1) B 2) C 3) D 4) D 5) B 6) C

THE PASSIVE VOICE

- 7) All the PS games consoles in the shop have gone. They _____ by other customers in the last three days.
- **A** buying **b** are buying **c** bought **d** were bought
- 8) Last night, Alberto's bicycle was _____ from the garden outside his house.
- **A** stolen **b** be stolen **c** stealing **d** being stealing
- 9) A few days ago, Fernando's car broke down. But luckily it was fixed ___ a man at the garage in only two hours.
- **A** from **b** by **c** with **d** at
- 10) I can wear my new watch all the time. For example, it _____ in the shower or in a swimming pool.
- **A** can wear **b** can worn **c** can be worn **d** can be wearing
- 11) Please remember that cups of tea or coffee _____ brought into the classroom.
- **A** must not **b** must not be **c** must not being **d** must not been
- 12) The last question in the test was very difficult. It was only _____ correctly by jair and chris.
- **A** answer **b** answering **c** answers **d** answered

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- 7) D 8) A 9) B 10) C 11) B 12) D

PASSIVE FORM

- 1. PEOPLE SPEAK PORTUGUESE IN BRAZIL.

- 2. THE GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING A NEW ROAD NEAR MY HOUSE.

3. MY GRANDFATHER

BUILT THIS HOUSE IN 1943.

4. PICASSO WAS

PAINTING GUERNICA AT THAT TIME.

5. THE CLEANER HAS

CLEANED THE OFFICE.

- 1. PORTUGUESE IS SPOKEN IN BRAZIL.
- 2. A NEW ROAD IS BEING PLANNED NEAR MY HOUSE.
- 3. THIS HOUSE WAS BUILT (BY MY GRANDFATHER) IN 1943.
- 4. GUERNICA WAS BEING PAINTED (BY PICASSO) AT THAT TIME.
- 5. THE OFFICE HAS BEEN CLEANED.

PASSIVE FORM

- 6. HE HAD WRITTEN THREE BOOKS BEFORE 1867.

_____ 7. JOHN WILL TELL YOU
LATER. _____ 8. BY THIS TIME

TOMORROW WE WILL HAVE SIGNED THE DEAL.

_____ 9. SOMEBODY SHOULD

DO THE WORK. _____ 10. THE

TRAFFIC MIGHT HAVE DELAYED JIMMY.

- 6. THREE BOOKS HAD BEEN WRITTEN BEFORE 1867.
- 7. YOU WILL BE TOLD (BY JOHN) LATER.
- 8. BY THIS TIME TOMORROW THE DEAL WILL HAVE BEEN SIGNED.
- 9. THE WORK SHOULD BE DONE.
- 10. JIMMY MIGHT HAVE BEEN DELAYED (BY THE TRAFFIC).