

THE PASSIVE

Look at these examples to see how the passive voice is used.

A lot of olive oil is produced in Italy.
This book was written by Angela Davis.
The suspect will be released tomorrow.
This product has not been tested on animals.

Grammar explanation

We use the passive voice to change the focus of the sentence.

My bike was stolen. (passive – focus on *my bike*)
Someone stole my bike. (active – focus on *someone*)

We often use the passive:

- when we prefer not to mention who or what does the action (for example, it's not known, it's obvious or we don't want to say)
- so that we can start a sentence with the most important or most logical information
- in more formal or scientific writing.

How we make the passive

We make the passive using the **verb *be* + past participle**. We start the sentence with the object.

Avatar was directed by James Cameron.

Object + *be* + past participle

It is not always necessary to add who or what did the action.

Only the form of *be* changes to make the tense. The past participle stays the same. Here are examples of the passive in its most common tenses.

Tense	Example	Structure
Present simple	<i>Alioli is made from oil, garlic and salt.</i>	<i>is/are</i> + past participle
Present continuous	<i>The hall is being painted this week.</i>	<i>is/are being</i> + past participle
Past simple	<i>John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963.</i>	<i>was/were</i> + past participle

Tense	Example	Structure
Past continuous	<i>The room was being cleaned when I arrived.</i>	<i>was/were being + past participle</i>
Present perfect	<i>Oranges have been grown here for centuries.</i>	<i>has/have been + past participle</i>
Past perfect	<i>When he got home, he found that his flat had been burgled.</i>	<i>had been + past participle</i>
Future simple	<i>The work will be finished next week.</i>	<i>will be + past participle</i>
Infinitive	<i>A mystery is something that can't be explained</i>	<i>be + past participle</i>

Negations :

Did you go to the party ? No, I wasn't invited.

This room is dirty. It hasn't been cleaned.

Questions :

When was this bridge built ?

Are we being recorded ?

Have you ever been bitten by a dog ?