

Passives and causatives

The passive

When we don't know who does/did something	The car was stolen at approximately 1.30 am.
When it's obvious who does/did something	Having been introduced in 1988, the Road Traffic Act regulates all vehicle use on UK roads.
When it's not important who does/did something	The XL500 was designed with young families in mind, so there's plenty of room in the boot.
To emphasise new information (which appears at the end of the sentence)	This type of submarine was developed during the Second World War by the Americans.
To avoid starting clauses with long expressions	We were surprised by the number of people trying to leave the city for the long weekend. (More natural than The number of people trying to leave the city for the long weekend surprised us.)
To produce a formal style	All passengers are required to present their ticket to the inspector.

Impersonal passive

Form	Common verbs	Example
noun + verb in passive form + infinitive / perfect infinitive	agree, assume, believe, claim, consider, estimate, expect, feel, find, guarantee, know, mean, presume, regard, report, say, suppose, think, understand	Tourism is expected to become a major part of the country's economy.
There + verb in passive form + infinitive / perfect infinitive		There are reported to have been a record number of accidents on the roads this year.
It + verb in passive form + that clause	accept, agree, argue, assume, believe, calculate, claim, consider, estimate, expect, feel, know, presume, report, say, suggest, suppose, think, understand	It is thought that the new railway will provide employment opportunities for local people.

Direct and indirect object

Some verbs in active sentences can be followed by both a direct and an indirect object (usually a person). Common verbs include: *bring, buy, get, give, leave, lend, make, offer, owe, pass, pay, promise, refuse, send, show, take, teach, tell, write*, etc. There are two possible passive forms.

Active sentence: *Michael gave the plane tickets to Jill.*

With indirect object as subject of passive verb **Jill was given** the plane tickets (by Michael).

With direct object as subject of passive verb **The plane tickets were given** to Jill (by Michael).

Watch out!

- In the second structure in the table above, we sometimes omit the preposition before indirect object pronouns.
✓ *Sharon's Rolls-Royce was left (to) her by her grandfather.*
- With the verbs *explain* and *suggest*, the preposition before indirect object pronouns cannot be omitted. They cannot be used with the first structure in the table above.
✗ *I was explained how to drive the train.*
✗ *How to drive the train was explained me.*
✓ *How to drive the train was explained to me.*

Avoiding the passive

The passive is not normally used with verbs in the present perfect continuous, past perfect continuous, future continuous or future perfect continuous tenses. Various prepositional phrases are used to avoid the passive in these tenses, including the following.

in progress	<p>✗ Preparations for the flight will be being made as the President arrives at the airport.</p> <p>✓ Preparations for the flight will be in progress as the President arrives at the airport.</p>
in training	<p>✗ At the end of this year, I will have been being trained as a pilot for four years.</p> <p>✓ At the end of this year, I will have been in training as a pilot for four years.</p>
on display	<p>✗ Vintage cars have been being displayed in the town centre all this week.</p> <p>✓ Vintage cars have been on display in the town centre all this week.</p>
under consideration	<p>✗ By the time they came to a decision, the problem had been being considered for some time.</p> <p>✓ By the time they came to a decision, the problem had been under consideration for some time.</p>
under construction	<p>✗ The new railway station has been being built for two years now.</p> <p>✓ The new railway station has been under construction for two years now.</p>

Watch out!

- Some verbs are not usually used in the passive. They include intransitive verbs such as *appear*, *arrive*, *die*, etc.
- Many verbs used statively are also not usually used in the passive. They include *consist*, *deserve*, *fit*, *have*, *lack*, *look*, *mind*, *realise*, *resemble*, *seem*, *suit*, etc.
- The verb *let* is not used in the passive when it means 'allow', although phrasal verbs with *let* can be used in the passive.
 - ✓ Alice was clearly guilty, but she **was let off** with a warning.
- Some verbs can be followed by the bare infinitive (without *to*) in active sentences. They are followed by the full infinitive in passive sentences. These verbs include *hear*, *help*, *make* and *see*.
 - ✓ We **heard** Jim **say** he was going to Albania. (active)
 - ✓ Jim **was heard to say** he was going to Albania. (passive)

Causative: get/have sth done

Actions we arrange for other people to do for us	Did you finally get your bike fixed?
Things we experience (usually negative and not intended)	I heard that Susie had her motorbike stolen .

Watch out!

- In general, *get* is more informal than *have* in causative structures.
- We can use other verbs instead of *get* and *have* with a causative meaning. They include *need*, *want* and *would like*.
 - ✓ I'd **like those cars washed** by this evening, please.
- The structure *get sth done* can also mean 'finish doing something'.
 - ✓ We'll set off as soon as I've **got the car fixed**.

Causative: get sb to do / have sb do

Actions we make somebody/something do for us	Did you get Alex to drive you all the way to London?
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Causative: get/have sb doing

Actions we make somebody/something start doing	Don't worry. We'll soon have your car running like new.
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Watch out!

- Most of the time, we do not show who does/did an action (the 'agent') in a passive or causative sentence. When we do want to refer to the agent, we use *by*.
 - ✓ We should get the car looked at **by** a professional.
- When we want to refer to materials or instruments used in a passive or causative sentence, we use *with*.
 - ✓ The engine is started **with** a special electronic card instead of a key.
- We use other prepositions after some past participles that are used like adjectives.
 - ✓ I am frightened **of** driving on motorways.
 - ✓ My car is covered **in** dirt.

A If the verb in bold is correct, put a tick. If it is incorrect, rewrite it correctly.

- 1 Could you tell me where your passport **was been issued**?
- 2 When the winning actor **was** finally **announced**, a big cheer went up.
- 3 **Has** your business trip to Calcutta next week **confirmed** by the Indian office?
- 4 Everyone who **was been invited** to the wedding came.
- 5 The wire coat hanger **invented** in 1903 by a Mr Parkhouse.
- 6 The issue **has discussed** in Parliament yesterday, but no decisions were taken.
- 7 By the time we get there, the problem **should have been sorted out**.
- 8 Britain **was be invaded** by the Romans under Emperor Claudius in 43 AD.
- 9 The party **had been planned** months in advance, but we still had problems.
- 10 After **be treated**, I was allowed to leave the hospital.
- 11 We boarded the ship and **were showing** to our cabin by a steward.
- 12 The new supermarket **is to be opened** by an actor from a soap opera.

B Write a verb from the box in the correct passive form in each gap.

allow • ask • find • give • know • light • make • meet • show • write

- 1 The stolen items in the attic of an empty house last week.
- 2 When the open-air cinema opens, the first film will be *Vertigo*.
- 3 Questions in Parliament about the Minister's business interests.
- 4 We're looking forward to a guided tour of the whole factory.
- 5 Just imagine that when these words , Europeans had not yet discovered America.
- 6 Once the barbecue , we'll be able to start cooking.
- 7 Before to see the invention, I had to agree not to tell anyone.
- 8 I would really like at the airport, if that's possible.
- 9 It very clear to us that we weren't welcome.
- 10 Gareth says he's always wanted as someone with a good sense of humour.

C Circle the correct word or phrase.

- 1 Global warming is thought **to be caused** / **is caused** by pollution.
- 2 There **are to be estimated** / **are estimated** to be about 5,400 different species of mammals.
- 3 It **is to be reported** / **has been reported** that gunshots have been heard in the city centre.
- 4 The escaped prisoner is believed **to use** / **to have used** a rope to climb the wall.
- 5 It **is to be calculated** / **is calculated** that about 60% of a man's body mass is water.
- 6 Over 200 people **are being understood** / **are understood** to have been injured in the explosion.
- 7 It is considered impolite in some cultures **to be eaten** / **to eat** with your left hand.
- 8 There **mean** / **were meant** to have been 60 crates of olives in the order, not 600!
- 9 **It** / **There** has been suggested that people who don't recycle should pay more tax.
- 10 Your order is guaranteed **will be delivered** / **to be delivered** within three working days.

- D** Each sentence contains one verb in the wrong form. Underline the incorrect word or phrase and rewrite it correctly.

Heathrow

- 1 Heathrow Airport, near London, has called the world's busiest international airport and the 68 million passengers who are processed each year would probably agree.
- 2 The land on which the airport stands sold to Fairey Aviation by the local vicar and was used for test flights during the 1930s, under the name Great Western Aerodrome.
- 3 In 1944, the airport was handed over to the government and was developed for civilian use, was named after a small village that was removed to create space, Heath Row.
- 4 The first concrete slab of the modern runways was laid by Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, and the first terminal building, which has later renamed Terminal 2, was opened two years later.
- 5 The London Underground was extended to reach Heathrow in 1977, meaning that passengers could be transport from central London via the Piccadilly Line in just under an hour.
- 6 Four passenger terminals and a cargo terminal have been constructed and permission was been granted for a fifth passenger terminal in 2001.
- 7 It has been suggested that a new airport, which would lead to Heathrow being retired over a period of 20 years, has been built on a floating island in the Thames, although no firm plans have been drawn up.

- E** Complete the sentences describing each situation using the phrase given.

- 1 I started training to be an accountant six months ago. I've got six more months to go, and then I have to take exams. (**in training**)
By the time I take my exams,
- 2 The council have been thinking for some time of redeveloping the city centre. (**under consideration**)
The redevelopment of the city centre
- 3 They've been having discussions on the issue for over two weeks. (**in progress**)
Discussions on the issue
- 4 This weekend, the local Art Society will be displaying their latest works at the library. (**on display**)
The local Art Society's latest works
- 5 George seems to have been putting his website together for a long time. (**under construction**)
George's website

- F** If the word or phrase in bold is correct, put a tick. If it is incorrect, rewrite it correctly.

- Hannah:** ... and that was that, really. Anyway, what about your new car? Tell me about that.
- Alison:** Oh, what a nightmare! We had to **have it repaired** twice! (1)
- Hannah:** Oh, no! What happened?
- Alison:** Well, we got **delivered it** to our house on Monday morning. (2)
- Hannah:** Right.
- Alison:** We decided to have it **check** straight away, because it had come all the way from America. (3)
- Hannah:** Oh, I didn't know you'd had them **do** that. (4)
- Alison:** Yeah. Anyway, we **had** my dad to have a look at it. And he found that the engine wasn't running properly. (5)
- Hannah:** Did you have the company **to come** to fix it? (6)
- Alison:** Well, not at first. We got my brother to **working** on it. (7)
- Hannah:** Oh, he's very good. I bet he soon had **running it** smoothly. (8)
- Alison:** Yes, but we still had to get the company **come out** in the end, because the fuel pump stopped working. (9)
- Hannah:** Terrible! You should **get** them to give you some compensation. (10)
- Alison:** Maybe. Oh, is that the time? Listen, give me a call ...

G Complete each sentence using the noun in bold and an appropriate causative form of the verb in bold.

- 1 If you don't understand, it to you again after the lesson.
(**your teacher / explain**)
- 2 I was a bit depressed, but watching my kitten play with a ball of wool soon
much better. (**me / feel**)
- 3 Don't bother redecorating yourself – it. (**a professional / do**)
- 4 was so annoying because it meant I had to take the tube to work.
(**our car / steal**)
- 5 You won't learn as much if you you with your homework all the time.
(**your parents / help**)
- 6 The concert started quietly, but the band soon to their hit songs.
(**us all / dance**)
- 7 Tell Gordon yourself! Don't try your dirty work for you! (**me / do**)
- 8 Have you thought about as short as mine? (**your hair / cut**)
- 9 I me how to juggle with five balls, but I still couldn't do it.
(**Karen / show**)
- 10 Have you heard about the problems caused by students by companies
on the Internet? (**their essays / write**)

H Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and eight words, including the word given.

- 1 They made me wait for over 20 minutes on the phone! **kept**
I for over 20 minutes on the phone!
- 2 Although people consider Ashley to be a star, she is always friendly towards everyone. **considered**
Despite, Ashley's always friendly towards everyone.
- 3 We have had reports that the Prime Minister is making a surprise visit to Syria. **be**
The Prime Minister a surprise visit to Syria.
- 4 The manager provided the staff with extra training. **by**
The the manager.
- 5 I think someone needs to explain this computer program to me. **explaining**
I think I need me.
- 6 They have been building the new stadium for much longer than they originally estimated. **under**
The new stadium for much longer than they originally estimated.
- 7 Do you know why they made Craig stay behind after the lesson? **to**
Do you know why behind after the lesson?
- 8 Call Lionel and ask him to send the reports up to my office. **have**
Call Lionel and the reports up to my office.

I Choose the correct answer.

- 1 When Nadine arrived, she soon at all her jokes.
A had everyone laughed
B had laughing everyone
C had everyone laughing
D had laughed everyone
- 2 The government must strong measures against crime.
A be seen be taking
B see to be taking
C seen to take
D be seen to be taking
- 3 Mrs Davies asked me to tell you that she would like by Friday at the latest.
A the orders sent
B sending the orders
C that you sent
D sent the orders
- 4 Joining a gym , but I didn't really fancy the idea.
A was suggested me
B to me was suggested
C was suggested to me
D was suggesting me
- 5 There between 4,000 and 6,000 languages in the world, depending on how you count them.
A say to be
B are said that
C are said to be
D said being
- 6 I spoke to Victor last night and he says he while he was on holiday.
A had stolen his phone
B got stolen his phone
C was got his phone stolen
D had his phone stolen
- 7 Why didn't you you when you moved house?
A have Aaron help
B have got Aaron help
C have Aaron helped
D get Aaron help
- 8 Profits slightly next year, although we don't predict any job losses.
A expect to fall
B are expecting to fall
C are expected falling
D are expected to fall
- 9 It's hard to believe that this film completely by computer.
A has been generating
B has generated
C has been generated
D was to generate
- 10 As soon as Dad , we can leave.
A has the car starting
B has got the car started
C got started the car
D was got starting the car

J Write one word in each gap.

The scramjet

Imagine (1) transported around the globe in a matter of hours, rather than the 24 hours which (2) currently required to get from London to Sydney. Such is the promise of the scramjet, a highly experimental type of engine which has been (3) development over the past couple of decades. In a conventional jet engine, air (4) sucked into the engine at speeds below the speed of sound, where it is mixed (5) fuel, ignited, and the exhaust gases provide thrust. In a scramjet, which has to (6) taken to supersonic speeds by conventional means before it will operate, the air enters at supersonic speeds.

It has (7) estimated that a scramjet might be capable of travelling at 12-24 times the speed of sound. However, the technology (8) been found to be extremely difficult to control. Although scientists (9) had scramjets perform short flights, commercial aircraft are still a long way in the future, and indeed may never (10) successfully developed.