

### SESSION 3

#### PASSIVE VOICE

#### I. CONTENTS:

1. Passive voice in past with by.
2. Passive voice in past without by.

#### II. OBJECTIVES:

At the end of the class, students:

- Will include the passive voice in the conversations and writings, for showing the main idea or who receives the action.
- Specify the important use of the passive voice in English.
- Will recognize the grammar structure in the affirmative, negative and interrogative form of the passive voice, practicing them in conversations and writings.
- Will value the importance of the passive voice in the transmission of news, scientific information and discovering.

#### III. DISCUSSION:

*Discuss the questions with your teacher and choose the most important ideas.*

- How do you make a sentence in which the most important is who receives the actions but no who does the action?
- How do you form the participles in Spanish?

#### IV. INFORMATIONAL AND FORMATIVE TEXT

##### 1.1. Use of Passive voice in past with by

Here is the grammatical structure in affirmative, negative and interrogative form of Passive Voice.

A. Passive voice in affirmative, simple tenses: Subject + verb to be in past, present or future + verb in past participle. Examples:

Simple Past	Simple Present	Simple Future
I was given	I am given	I will be given
You were given	You are given	You will be given
He was given	He is given	He will be given
She was given	She is given	She will be given
It was given	It is given	It will be given
We were given	We are given	We will be given
You were given	You are given	You will be given
They were given	They are given	They will be given

B. Passive voice in negative, simple tenses: Subject + verb to be in past, present or future + not + verb in past participle. Examples:

Simple Past	Simple Present	Simple Future
I wasn't given	I'm not given	I won't be given
You weren't given	You aren't given	You won't be given
He wasn't given	He isn't given	He won't be given
She wasn't given	She isn't given	She won't be given
It wasn't given	It isn't given	It won't be given
We weren't given	We aren't given	We won't be given
You weren't given	You aren't given	You won't be given
They weren't given	They aren't given	They won't be given

C. Passive voice in interrogative, simple tenses: **Verb to be in past, present or future + Subject + verb in past participle.** Examples:

Simple Past	Simple Present	Simple Future
Was I given?	Am I given?	Will I be given?
Were you given?	Are you given?	Will you be given?
Was he given?	Is he given?	Will he be given?
Was she given?	Is she given?	Will she be given?
Was it given?	Is it given?	Will it be given?
Were we given?	Are we given?	Will we be given?
Were you given?	Are you given?	Will you be given?
Were they given?	Are they given?	Will they be given?

The passive voice is used when focusing on the person or thing affected by an action. The Passive is formed: Passive Subject + to be + Past Participle. Example: The house was built in 1989. It is often used in business when the object of the action is more important than those who perform the action. For Example: We have produced over 20 different models in the past two years. Changes to: Over 20 different models have been produced in the past two years. If the agent is important -the person, company or thing that does the action-, use by. For Example: Tim Wilson wrote The Flight to Brunswick in 1987. Changes to: The Flight to Brunswick was written in 1987 by Tim Wilson. Only verbs that take an object can be used in the passive voice.

Construction of the Passive Voice. The main verb is always in its past participle form. Look at these examples:

Subject	Auxiliary verb –to be-		Main verb –past participle-	
Water	is		drunk	by everyone.
100 people	are		employed	by this company.
I	am		paid	in euros.
We	are	not	paid	in dollars
Are	they		paid	in yens?

We use the passive when: we want to make the active object more important we do not know the active subject. Example:

	Subject	Verb	Object
Give importance to active object -Candidate Colosio -	Candidate Colosio	was killed	by Mario Aburto Martinez
Active subject unknown	My pencil	has been stolen	?

Note that we always use by to introduce the passive object -Fish are eaten by cats-. Look at this sentence: He was killed with a gun. Normally we use by to introduce the passive object. But the gun is not the active subject. The gun did not kill him. He was killed by somebody with a gun. In the active voice, it would be: Somebody killed him with a gun. The gun is the instrument. Somebody is the agent or doer.

Here are some sentences in active voice and they change to Passive Voice. The grammatical structure is: Subject + finite form of to be + Past Participle -3rd column of irregular verbs- Example: A letter was written. When rewriting active sentences in passive voice, note the following: the object of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence; the finite form of the verb is changed -to be + past participle-; the subject of the active sentence becomes the object of the passive sentence -or is dropped-. Examples:

Tense	Voice	Subject	Verb	Object
Simple Present	Active	Evelyn	writes	a letter
	Passive	A letter	is written	by Evelyn
Simple Past	Active	Sofia	Wrote	A letter
	Passive	A letter	was written	by Sofia
Simple Future	Active	Annel	will write	a letter
	Passive	A letter	will be written	by Annel

The Passive Sentences with Two Objects: Rewriting an active sentence with two objects in passive voice means that one of the two objects becomes the subject, the other one remains an object. Which object to transform into a subject depends on what you want to put the focus on.

Voice	Subject	Verb	Object 1	Object 2
Active	Susana	wrote	a letter	to me.
Passive	A letter	was written	to me	by Susana.
Passive	I	was written	a letter	by Susana.

### 2.1. Passive voice in past without by.

Once again the structure of the passive voice is very simple: subject + auxiliary verb –be- + main verb -past participle- The main verb is always in its past participle form. We can form the passive in any tense. In fact, conjugation of verbs in the passive tense is rather easy, as the main verb is always in past participle form and the auxiliary verb is always be. To form the required tense, we conjugate the auxiliary verb. So, for example: present simple: It is made; present continuous: It is being made; present perfect: It has been made.

Here are some examples with most of the possible tenses:

Infinitive		To be washed
<b>Simple</b>	Present	It is washed
	Past	It was washed
	Future	It will be washed
	Conditional	It would be washed
<b>Continuous</b>	Present	It is being washed
	Past	It was being washed
	Future	It will be being washed
	Conditional	It would be being washed
<b>Perfect simple</b>	Present	It has been washed
	Past	It had been washed
	Future	It will have been washed
	Conditional	It would have been washed
<b>Perfect continuous</b>	Present	It has been being washed
	Past	It had been being washed
	Future	It will have been being washed
	Conditional	It would have been being washed

The Passive voice without *by*, form the Personal Passive and Impersonal Passive. The Personal Passive simply means that the object of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence. So every verb that needs an object -transitive verb- can form a personal passive. Example: They build houses. – Houses are built.

Verbs not having an object -intransitive verb- can't be used in passive form -because no object that can become the subject of the passive sentence is found-. In case you need to use an intransitive verb in passive voice, you'll need an impersonal sentence – this is why this passive is known as Impersonal Passive. Example: He says – It is said.  
 Impersonal Passive isn't as commonly used in English as in other languages -German, Latin-. In English, Impersonal Passive is just used with perception verbs -say, think and know-. Read this example: People say that the future has many surprises in store. – It is said that the future has many surprises in store. Even as Impersonal Passive is possible here, Personal Passive is more common: They say that the future has many surprises in store. – The future is said to have many surprises in store. The subject of the subordinate clause –the future- is placed at the beginning of the sentence; the verb of perception is changed to passive voice. The remaining part of the sentence is set using an infinitive form with to. Sometimes the expression Personal Passive is used in teaching English when the indirect object of active form sentences changes into the subject of the passive form sentence.

**Examples of the Passive Voice Without Agent:**

The computer was stolen. -passive voice Here the doer is not known. Hence we take someone as the doer. The Active form of the sentence is: Someone stole the watch.
The killer was arrested. -passive voice- Here we know that Policemen made the arrest. Hence we take policemen as the doers. The Active form of the sentence is: Policemen arrested the thief.
The President is expected to come tomorrow. -passive voice- Here we know that people expect him. Hence the Answer is: People expect the President to come tomorrow. -active voice-
My watch has been stolen. -passive voice- Someone has stolen my watch. -active voice-
Our team had been defeated. -passive voice- The enemy had defeated our team. -active voice-
Postcards are delivered twice a day. -passive voice- The postman delivers postcards twice a day. -active voice-
The laws should be obeyed. -passive voice- We should obey the laws. -active voice-
He was dismissed from service. -passive voice- The manager dismissed him from service. -active voice-

So when is it OK to use the passive? Sometimes the passive voice is the best choice. Here are a few instances when the passive voice is quite useful:

1. To emphasize an object. Take a look at this example: 100 votes are required to pass the bill. This passive sentence emphasizes the number of votes required. An active version of the sentence -The bill requires 100 votes to pass- would put the emphasis on the bill, which may be less dramatic.
2. To de-emphasize an unknown subject/actor. Consider this example: Over 120 different contaminants have been dumped into the river. If you don't know who the actor is—in this case, if you don't actually know who dumped all of those contaminants in the river—then you may need to write in the passive. But remember, if you do know the actor, and if the clarity and meaning of your writing would benefit from indicating him/her/it/them, then use an active construction. Yet consider the third case.
3. If your readers don't need to know who's responsible for the action. Here's where your choice can be difficult; some instances are less clear than others. Try to put yourself in your reader's position to anticipate how he/she will react to the way you have phrased your thoughts.

Now let see the importance of the passive voice in the transmission of news, scientific information and discovering.

The tone used in conventional scientific writing to express objectiveness reflects the philosophy of the scientific method: if results don't show the same pattern, then they are invalid. Restating: experiment results are only accepted as valid if different researchers carrying on the same experiments and analyses described produce the same results. Therefore, scientists try to use a tone that changes the focus from the researcher to the research itself. So, some stylistic conventions make objectivity better: Passive voice

They may have told you some time in your career courses that using the passive voice is almost always bad, except for sciences. In the passive voice structure the subject who does the action is dropped. The explanation of using the passive voice in scientific reports is that it makes objectivity better, taking the scientist –the researcher- out of the scene -the research-. But the passive voice can also be awkward and confusing and is almost always considered to be less engaging -more boring- than the active voice. This is the reason why it is recommended not to abuse the unnecessary use of the passive voice.

Nowadays, the active voice is preferred by most scientists, even if it takes the use of I or we. It's clearly reasonable -and simpler- to say We worked on a genetic research instead of saying a genetic research was worked on, or Here we present the terst results rather than test results are presented here. Almost every present-day edition of scientific kind guidelines encourages the use of the active voice, but some instructors -or journal editors- will express different opinions about this topic. If you are not sure, ask the instructor or editor who will check your writings to find out if you have to use the passive voice or not.

If you decide to use the active voice with I or we, there are a some indications to take into account: Don't starting sentences with I or we: this makes the scientific topic less important. Don't use I or we when you're expressing a conjecture, either substantiated or not. Everything you say should come from logic, not from personal beliefs or subjectivity. Don't use emotion conveying words together with I or we -I believe-, -we feel-. Never use we so that it includes the audience - trait evolution is in action-; using we here gives a condescending tone.

Sometimes, instead of reporting the results of scientific work you have done, you will write about the research of other scientists. These writings might include publication reviews and investigation reports on scientific topics. You'll perform two main possible activities in these assignments: report what other researchers do or indicate general scientific knowledge –what others' research have discovered-. Sometimes you'll do both tasks. In the two cases, you are able to easily use active form sentences even if you are tempted to use the passive—especially if you use the passive when writing your result reports.

It's up to you to decide which of these two examples is clearer. Heart disease is considered to be the most important factor in the death rate in the United States. –passive- or Research shows that heart disease is the most important factor in the death rate in the United States. -active- Also, you can write this sentence using human actors: Researchers show that heart disease is the most important factor in the death rate in the United States. These two sentences imply a relationship that doesn't exist in first one. The first example doesn't say who or what prompts us to recognize this conclusion about heart disease. There's one more example from a report describing angioplasty. Which is better to you? The balloon is put in the blockage area and is inflated or The doctor puts the balloon in the blockage area and inflates it. You can make your scientific writing better if you don't rely too much on the passive form. Whatever field you report on, if you use the passive voice, you might convey to your reader uncertain and imprecise information about your writing and thinking. The important thing is that know when your instructor thinks when the use the passive voice is more appropriate.