

GRAMMAR

PASSIVES

1. PASSIVE VERB FORMS

BE (in the necessary tense form) + DONE

The Internet	was launched	in 1969.
This matter	is being discussed	right now in the US Senate.
He	has been called	a born politician.
The information	will be published	in the scientific literature.



Notes:

1. **The Passive** can be used with **modal verbs** (*modal + be + done*)
*The work **can be divided** into a few stages.*
*People's cultural beliefs **should be respected**.*
2. **Future Continuous Passives** (*will be being done*) and **Perfect Continuous Passives** (*has / had been being done*) are **unusual** and should be **avoided**.

2. PASSIVE vs ACTIVE

We use **the Passive** when we are more interested in the *action* than in the person or thing performing the action.

Active: They *opened* object
the airport in 1965.

Passive: subject
The airport *was opened* in 1965.

The subject of the active verb becomes the *agent* which is usually omitted. If necessary it is introduced with *by*.

Active: subject
British scientists *are developing* a robot to work in toxic environments.

Passive: A robot to work in toxic environments *is being developed* agent
by British scientists.

Exercise 1. Choose the correct form in italics.

1. In 1948, the transistor *has developed* / *was developed* by the Bell Telephone Company.
2. The Vietnam war *was dividing* / *was divided* the nation.
3. Women *must be recognized* / *must be recognizing* in Iraq's new society.
4. An agreement on cooperation between the two countries *will be signed* / *will sign* on Wednesday.
5. Britons using the music download website *have warned* / *have been warned* that they are breaking the law.
6. By that time the friends *had raised* / *were raised* enough capital to open a trading store.
7. By the age of six the average child *will be completed* / *will have completed* the basic American education.
8. A privately developed manned rocket *will attempt* / *will be attempted* to reach space this month.
9. World-wide, some 11% of mammals and birds *are threatened* / *are threatening* with extinction.
10. Many giant multinational companies *were pressed* / *were pressing* Bangladesh for enforcement (применение) of the intellectual property rights.
11. I had known Steve since kindergarten and *had invited* / *had been invited* to every other birthday.
12. By the end of the year, 12,000 kilometers of those roads *will have been finished* / *will have finished*.

Exercise 2. Put the words in brackets in the correct passive form.

1. The world's future (decide) at this time.
2. Many people in Britain think that smoking age should (raise).
3. The Roman Army (divide) into legions of about 5,000 men.
4. You (press) for time if you take the course.
5. People (warn) about HIV and AIDS for over twenty years now.
6. The Anglo-Irish Agreement (sign) by Margaret Thatcher and Irish Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald on November 15, 1985.
7. Three terror suspects (interrogate) by the police now.
8. Upper and Lower Canada (unite) by 1841.
9. Next year the farm (own) by the same family for 100 years.
10. "Cats (intend) to teach us that not everything in nature has a purpose." (Garrison Keillor)
11. By the 1860s, baseball, unrivaled in popularity, (describe) as America's "national pastime."
12. When I met her, she (separate) from her husband for four years.



Note: *By + agent* is used to say **who** or **what** did the action. It is omitted when the *agent* is **unknown, unimportant, or obvious** from the context.

When we talk about an *instrument* or *material* used by the *agent* to perform an action, we use a *with*-phrase:

*The glass front door was broken **with stones**.* (instrument)

*The road was covered **with ice**.* (material)

Note: with a number of *materials* we use *in* (e.g. *in pencil, in ink, in paint, in watercolours* — акварель).

*The manuscript was written **in pencil** in an exercise book.*

Exercise 3. Fill in the gaps with **by**, **with**, or **in**.

1. In 1796 the roof of the cathedral was covered ____ iron and the cupola was gilded.
2. The National Gallery of Art (West Building) was designed ____ John Russell Pope in 1941.
3. Gary Null's library is filled ____ vital health information.
4. Anna Wintour, editor-in-chief of Vogue magazine, was hit ____ a tofu pie (tofu is a kind of cheese made from soy beans) ____ anti-fur demonstrators as she attended Paris fashion week.
5. A new paper-backed edition was published ____ Dover Books Inc. of New York in 1997.
6. The sketch was drawn ____ ink and signed ____ Shultz.
7. The sick man's diabetes has been treated ____ tablets for two years.
8. The giraffe was drawn ____ paint ____ a five-year-old.
9. Before the 1400s, ale (имбирное пиво) was flavoured ____ herbs such as rosemary and thyme (тимьян).
10. The local elections, in every province, will be watched ____ international observers.
11. Dipping chocolate is made ____ more cocoa butter than regular eating chocolate.
12. One of the climbers was killed ____ a falling stone.

PASSIVE vs ACTIVE

Besides the reasons mentioned above **the Passive** may be preferable to **the Active**:

- if the subject of a verb is new information (to put the "news" at the end we use a passive structure often including the *agent*)

Compare the two sentences in which the new information is underlined:

*Dr. John Stith Pemberton (1830–1888) **invented** Coca-Cola on May 8th, 1886 in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.*

*Coca-Cola **was invented** by an American pharmacist Dr. John S. Pemberton.*

- if the subject of a verb is a long clause (the passive structure includes the *agent*)
*Dr. McHugh **was surprised** by the objections to his presence at the meeting.*
(More natural than *The objections to his presence at the meeting surprised Dr. McHugh.*)
- in formal English (in academic and scientific writing) to focus on the issues rather than on the people involved (the *agent* is omitted)
*The pyramids of Egypt **were built** as a burial place for the pharaoh.*
*Jatropha plant **has been researched** over the last five years at the Hohenheim University in Germany and could be "the fuel of the future."*

THE PARTICULARS

3. PREPOSITIONAL VERBS IN THE PASSIVE

approve of call in comment on deal with discriminate against laugh at	listen to look after look at look for look into look upon	mock at operate on rely on shout at talk about think of
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Verbs followed by a preposition in passive structures take the preposition immediately after them.

*The patient **was operated on** yesterday.*

*Every detail **will be looked into**.*

*This book **is being much talked about**.*

Exercise 4. Put the sentences into the Passive and translate them into Russian.

- In India, they have always thought of shopping for books as a book-lover's hobby.
- People looked upon him as an upper-class snob.
- Philip is a true friend, you can rely on him.
- The fact that people laughed at some geniuses does not mean that all who people laugh at are geniuses.
- Today specialists are talking much about the environment of children's growth.
- The Head of the College will look at and comment on all applications.
- While they were operating on the patient's knee, one of the surgical instruments broke.
- She says that people never listen to her opinion and her advice.
- Phillip's parents approved of his marriage.
- The Government will urgently deal with the farmers' problems.
- Two female assistant professors at the University of Illinois claimed that the authorities discriminated against them in pay.
- The police have been looking for the stolen painting for ten days.

4. VERBS WITH TWO OBJECTS THAT CAN BE USED IN TWO PASSIVE STRUCTURES

ask give grant	lend offer pay	promise refuse send	show teach tell
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Verbs which take two objects, **direct** and **indirect**, can be used in two passive structures.

Active: *His brother has given **him** (1) **money** (2) to help him get married.**

Passive: *(1) **He** has been given money to help him get married.*

*(2) **Money** has been given to him to help him get married.*

* (1) is an **indirect** object; (2) is a **direct** object



Notes:

1. The first passive structure is **more common**.
2. In the second passive structure, the preposition "**to**" is often used before the indirect object.

Exercise 5. Change the sentences into the Passive. Give two variants.

1. The officer asked him the same question again.
2. The immigration authorities have refused him an application for a visa.
3. They teach the children all sorts of skills at that school.
4. Have the policemen shown you any pictures?
5. They granted the refugees political asylum (убежище) in the Czech Republic five months ago.
6. They have offered the Professor a position at Harvard University.
7. The company will pay Ms Schmitt a salary of \$5000 per week.
8. A friend lent Mr Miller a house in Kent.
9. The doctor has told the patient everything about the treatment.
10. A market gardener gave him a present of a basket of vegetables.
11. If you are a research student, we will send you the details of registration in December.
12. What exactly did they promise you?

5. VERBS WITH TWO OBJECTS THAT CAN BE USED IN ONE PASSIVE STRUCTURE

announce devote	describe dictate	explain point out	propose suggest
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Verbs which take two objects, **direct** and **prepositional**, can only be used in one passive structure.

Active: *The teacher explained **the rule** (1) **to the students** (2).**

Passive: (1) ***The rule** was explained to the students.*

 (2) **Impossible!**

* (1) is a **direct** object; (2) is a **prepositional** object

Exercise 6. Change the sentences into the Passive to shift the emphasis. Omit the agent where possible.

1. The children were happy when the teacher announced the trip to them.
2. They have described you to me as a very shy person.
3. The instructor will point out all mistakes to the students.
4. Tom suggested this idea to us.
5. They have never explained the rules of the game to Stevens.
6. The manager will dictate the terms of the contract to you.
7. His lawyer has suggested divorce to him as a financial solution.
8. The management will announce a plan to the staff within a week.
9. France and Turkey proposed this resolution to the Security Council in 1991.
10. Dr. Korczak devoted his life to children.

Exercise 7. Change the verbs in italics from the Active into the Passive to make sentences more natural.

1. They *granted* George admission to Harvard College when he returned to America.
2. The management *gave* the employees less support than they promised.
3. The manager *will explain* to the candidates the duties and responsibilities of the position.
4. The University of Miami *has offered* Mr. Patel a scholarship of \$ 7,100 per year.
5. Jenny's brother-in-law *had described* Charlie to her as a young, handsome man.
6. They *paid* the director a handsome sum for his first film.
7. Once he *pointed out* the mistake to us, we corrected it within five minutes.
8. The parents *have promised* the child a reward for reading.
9. A local hotel clerk *suggested* the restaurant to us when we were looking for a place to eat lunch.
10. At the top of the page, we *will show* you the estimated length of the quiz.
11. The authorities *have refused* Louise permission to display the Australian flag at her house in Windermere.
12. They *told* me to write the letter exactly as they *dictated* it to me.
13. Someone *has lent* him money to study in Europe.
14. A messenger *announced* the news to him.