

# Passive Voice

## What Is Passive Voice?

At its most basic, in the active voice, the subject of the sentence does the action; in the passive voice, the action is done to the subject by another performer of the verb.

Active Sentence:

Subject + Verb + Optional Object

Lisa played the violin.

Passive Voice:

Subject + Form of 'to be' + Past Participle + Optional Prepositional Phrase

The violin was played by Lisa.

The prepositional phrase 'by Lisa' tells you who is doing the action, but she is no longer the grammatical subject. You can drop Lisa from the sentence altogether, and it would still be a complete sentence: The violin was played.

## Should I Avoid the Passive Voice?

The passive voice has been demonised in recent years, but it does have its uses, so there is no reason to avoid it altogether.

### When To Use

To avoid blame

For a neutral or objective tone

When the doer is obvious, unimportant or unknown

When you need to focus on what's important by bringing it to the front

### When To Avoid

When the style guide you're using says you should

When you need clarity and brevity

# Tenses in the Passive

## Present Simple Passive

Affirmative	Subject + am/is/are + past participle	The food is cooked.
Negative	Subject + am/is/are + not + past participle	The food is not cooked.
Interrogative	Am/is/are + subject + past participle?	Is the food cooked?

## Past Simple Passive

<b>Affirmative</b>	Subject + was/were + past participle	<b>The phone was broken.</b>
Negative	Subject + was/were + not + past participle	The phone was not broken.
Interrogative	Was/were + subject + past participle?	Was the phone broken?

## 'Will' Future Simple Passive

<b>Affirmative</b>	<b>Subject + will + be + past participle</b>	<b>The money will be donated.</b>
Negative	Subject + will + not + be + past participle	The money will not be donated.
Interrogative	Will + subject + be + past participle?	Will the money be donated?



## 'Going To' Future Simple Passive


<b>Affirmative</b>	<b>Subject + am/is/are + going to + be + past participle.</b>	<b>A refund is going to be offered.</b>
Negative	Subject + am/is/are + not + going to + be + past participle	A refund is not going to be offered.
Interrogative	Am/is/are + subject + going to + be + past participle?	Is a refund going to be offered?

## Present Continuous Passive

<b>Affirmative</b>	<b>Subject + am/is/are + being + past participle</b>	<b>They are being watched.</b>
Negative	Subject + am/is/are + not + being + past participle	They are not being watched.
Interrogative	Am/is/are + subject + past participle?	Are they being watched?

## Past Continuous Passive

<b>Affirmative</b>	<b>Subject + was/were + being + past participle</b>	<b>The car was being kept at a garage.</b>
Negative	Subject + was/were + not + being + past participle	The car was not being kept at a garage.
Interrogative	Was/were + subject + being + past participle?	Was the car being kept at a garage?





## Present Perfect Passive

<b>Affirmative</b>	<b>Subject + have/has + been + past participle</b>	<b>The shop has been closed.</b>
Negative	Subject + have/has + not + been + past participle	The shop has not been closed.
Interrogative	Have/has + subject + been + past participle?	Have/has the shop been closed?

## Past Perfect Passive

<b>Affirmative</b>	<b>Subject + had + been + past participle</b>	<b>The car had been damaged.</b>
Negative	Subject + had + not + been + past participle	The car had not been damaged.
Interrogative	Had + subject + past participle?	Had the car been damaged?



## Some More Examples

The BBC was founded in 1922.

The room was being used by another class.

Erich Weisz is better known by his stage name Harry Houdini.

The vase had been broken.