

Passive voice

◆ 1. Passive is a voice, NOT a tense.

Voice shows whether the subject of a sentence *performs* or *receives* the action.

- **Active Voice:** The subject **does** the action.
👉 *The chef cooks the meal.*
 - **Passive Voice:** The subject **receives** the action.
👉 *The meal is cooked.*
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◆ 2. Voice vs Tense

- **Tense** tells **when** something happens (past, present, future).
- **Voice** tells **who does** the action (active) or **who receives** it (passive).

💡 You can have **any tense** in either **active** or **passive voice**.

◆ 3. How Passive Voice is Formed

The **passive** is always made using 2 language items:



Does this mean passive is in the past? Does the past participle show past?

No.

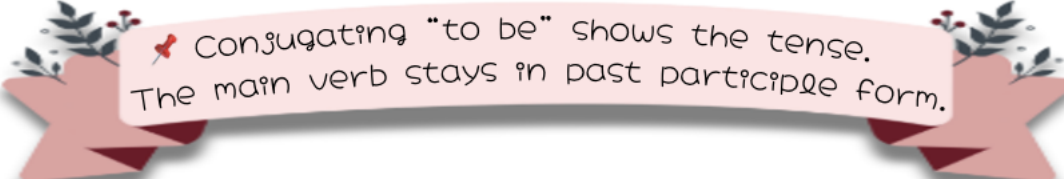
Passive voice indicates the subject DID NOT perform the action by using “to be” and a “past participle”. So it “borrows” the past participle to show voice, but does not express past time.



To form the passive in different tenses we conjugate the verb “to be” part of the passive formula.

So, “see” becomes “is seen”, while “saw” becomes “was seen”, and will see becomes “will be seen”:

TENSE	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
PRESENT SIMPLE	She writes emails.	Emails are written.
PAST SIMPLE	He painted the wall.	The wall was painted.
PRESENT CONTINUOUS	They are watching a film.	A film is being watched.
PAST CONTINUOUS	He was cleaning the car.	The car was being cleaned.
PRESENT PERFECT	She has made a cake.	A cake has been made.
PAST PERFECT	They had finished the project.	The project had been finished.
FUTURE SIMPLE	They will deliver the package.	The package will be delivered.
MODAL + VERB	You must follow the rules.	The rules must be followed.


 Conjugating "to be" shows the tense.
 The main verb stays in past participle form.

◆ 4. Main Uses of the Passive

1. **Focus on the object** rather than the subject:

👉 *The Mona Lisa was painted in 1503.* (Who did it isn't important here.)

2. **The subject is unknown:**

👉 *My wallet was stolen.* (We don't know who did it.)

3. **General truth or procedure:**

👉 *English is spoken worldwide.*

4. **Formal or scientific writing:**

👉 *The data were collected over three weeks.*

◆ 5. Variations & Special Cases



✓ Passive with Modals

The rules must be followed.

The report can be completed today.



✓ Get Passive (Informal)

He got promoted last year.

Often used in spoken English, especially for unexpected or emotional events.



✓ Passive with two objects

They gave her a prize.

→ *She was given a prize.*

→ *A prize was given to her.*



✓ It is said that... / He is believed to...

Used to report without naming a subject:

- *It is said that he is rich.*
- *He is believed to be rich.*



✓ Passive infinitive

The house needs to be cleaned



✓ Passive gerund

He doesn't like being told what to do

GRAMMAR
The passive: present simple and past simple → SB p.86

1 ☆☆☆ Mark the sentences A (present active), B (present passive), C (past active) or D (past passive).

0 Our house wasn't built very well.

1 The rubbish bins are emptied every Monday.

2 We were late for school again yesterday.

3 They're Polish.

4 Dad wasn't in a good mood this morning.

5 The weather's horrible today.

6 We were beaten in the final by Sid and Fred.

7 She's protected by a police officer at all times.

D

0 - "wasn't built" = to be in the past simple, + past participle. Therefore, it's past passive.

1- "are emptied" = to be in the present simple + past participle. Therefore it's present passive.

2 - "were late" = to be + adverb of time, therefore it's past active because there is no past participle to go with that, and "they" is the subject performing the action of being late.

3 - "they are" is just the verb to be in the present, so it's present active.

4 - "wasn't in a good mood" the verb is "wasn't" plus a prepositional phrase, so it's past active because there is no past participle to show that the subject did not do the action, and it was the subject "dad" the one who "was in a bad mood."