

Passives

Entry test

- 1 Finish each of the following sentences in such a way that it is as similar as possible to the sentence before it.
- a The car completely destroyed my motorbike.
My motorbike
 - b Second prize was awarded to an unknown author from Patras.
An unknown author from Patras
 - c The judge refused him permission to appeal against the decision.
He
 - d Blur have earned several million pounds from their new album.
Blur's new album
 - e They suggested we try a new method of checking how much we were spending.
We

SCORE

FOR OBJECTS AND AGENTS WITH THE PASSIVE, SEE SECTION 1.

- 2 Fill in each of the blanks with a suitable word or phrase.
- a My proposals were rejected and I was back down.
 - b I think he needs told to keep his nose clean.
 - c The problem was been told where the fire escapes were.
 - d His son is believed kidnapped by separatist guerrillas.
 - e Under the old proposals, candidates were been given an extra 15 minutes to complete their papers.

SCORE

FOR INFINITIVES AND -ING FORM PASSIVES, SEE SECTION 2.

- 3 Fill the blanks with a suitable word or phrase.
- a The video machine is behaving strangely but we're fixed next week.
 - b The lights keep flickering; we must to look at the wiring for us.
 - c Ian's not the easiest person to get on with; that's something you'll have to.
 - d I car broken into the other day and the radio stolen.
 - e Elderly people can get in by conmen going from house to house.

SCORE

FOR STRUCTURES WITH GET AND HAVE, SEE SECTION 3.

- 4 Finish each of the following sentences in such a way that it is as similar as possible to the sentence before it.
- a Leaving that dress in the sun has made it fade.
That dress
 - b We watched the men sail the boat into the harbour.
We watched the boat
 - c I dropped the glass and cracked it.
The glass cracked
 - d I added flour to the sauce and thickened it.
The sauce
 - e They're selling a lot of copies of that new single.
That new single

SCORE

FOR TRANSITIVE TO INTRANSITIVE WITHOUT USING THE PASSIVE, SEE SECTION 4.

TOTAL SCORE

OVERVIEW

1 FORM OF THE PASSIVE

We form the passive using *be* in an appropriate tense or form + the past participle of a transitive verb:

*A small sum of money **was stolen** from the cash box.*

*They **ought to have been punished** more severely.*

***Having been beaten** in the semi-final, she flew home the next day.*

- In spoken English, we sometimes use *get* instead of *be* in the passive:
*They **got told off** for making so much noise.*
- However, *get* + *-ed* is more common with an active meaning similar to 'become' in phrases like *get dressed*, *get married*, etc. (See Section 3.2).

2 REASONS FOR USING THE PASSIVE

In English, the topic or subject matter is commonly at the beginning of the sentence, and new information about the subject is normally at the end. In an active sentence, the 'agent' (the person or thing that performs the action) usually comes first and is the subject of the sentence:

Subject (Agent)	Action	Result
<i>Olympiakos</i>	<i>scored</i>	<i>the first goal.</i>

This active sentence is principally about Olympiakos.

- In the passive, the result or thing affected by the action comes first and is the subject of the sentence:

Subject (Result)	Action	Agent
<i>The first goal</i>	<i>was scored</i>	<i>by Olympiakos.</i>

This passive sentence is principally about the goal.

We choose between active and passive because of the topic we are talking about, especially when reporting information. An English newspaper, assuming its readers are interested in the England football team, makes the England team the topic. It is likely to report:

*England **have been beaten** by Germany in a penalty shoot-out.*

A German newspaper, more interested in their own national team, is likely to report:

*Germany **has beaten** England in a penalty shoot-out.*

Other reasons for using the passive include:

- the agent is unknown or obvious (see also Section 1):
*I **was born** in 1982.*
*Coffee **will be made** available after the meal.*
- the agent is 'people or things in general':
*Some verbs **cannot be used** in the Continuous.*
- the agent is a long phrase:
*Helen was surprised **by all the messages of sympathy that she received**.*
- avoiding references to ourselves and making a statement impersonal:
*We **can't** possibly **complete** this work overnight.*
becomes: *This work **can't** possibly **be completed** overnight.* (= the work is the problem, not us)
- avoiding 'you' in orders and rules:
You must give in your application before the end of the week. becomes: *All applications **must be given in** before the end of the week.*
- in factual writing when the focus is usually on events, achievements, etc. rather than agents:
*Vaccination **had been pioneered** two hundred years earlier.*



watch out!

- Not all *be* + *-ed* forms are passive. They may be adjectives:
*I **was worried** we would be late because of the traffic.*
- We avoid passive constructions with *be being* or *been being*, although they sometimes occur in spoken English:
Avoid: *The road ~~will have been being repaired~~ for months.*
✓ *They **will have been repairing** the road for months.* or: *The road **will have been under repair** for months.*

SECTION I

Agents and objects with the passive

1 THE AGENT

Not mentioning the agent

In most passive sentences we have no interest in who or what performs the action. We are interested in the action itself, who or what is affected by the action, or what is the result of it (see Overview). In fact, only about 20% of passive sentences mention the agent:

*That window **has been broken** again!*

Mentioning the agent

We mention the agent when we think the information is important, especially if we want to say more about it, for example with a relative clause:

*I remember **being taken** to the fair **by my father**, who rarely showed any interest in such things.*

*The survivors **were picked out** of the water **by a cruise liner** which had heard their distress call.*

- The agent is usually introduced with *by* (See Section 6.3 for prepositions after passives).

2 VERBS WITH TWO OBJECTS

Verbs that have two objects (usually a person and a thing) in the active usually have two passive forms because either of the objects can become the new subject:

*They **gave the award** to an unknown actress.*

(= active)

***The award** was given to an unknown actress.*

(= passive)

An unknown actress was given the award.

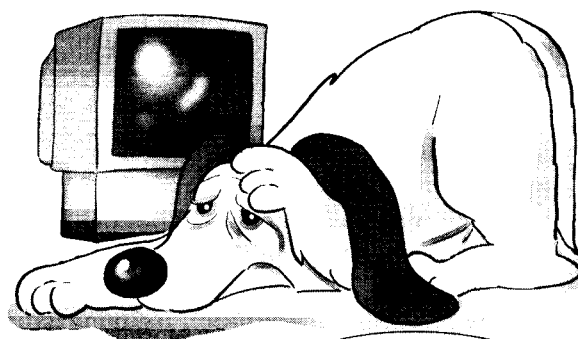
(= passive)

- We usually add a preposition before the personal object. The preposition is usually *to*, but we sometimes use *for*:
*A note **was handed to** the minister.*
*A slice of cake **was cut for** him.*
- However, some verbs, e.g. *allow*, *ask*, *cause*, *forgive*, *deny*, don't normally take a preposition before the personal object:
*Permission **was refused** him.*

3 VERBS WITH LIMITED USE IN THE PASSIVE

We can't use some verbs as freely in the passive as others.

- We can't use intransitive verbs in the passive because they don't have an object that can be changed into the subject:
~~✗ *The Tasmanian tiger **was died out** early this century.*~~
✓ *The Tasmanian tiger **died out** early this century.*
- Some verbs, e.g. *suggest* and *explain*, can't change the indirect object to subject:
~~✗ *He **was explained** the procedure.*~~
~~*We **were suggested** a new time.*~~
✓ *The procedure **was explained to** him.*
*A new time **was suggested for** us.*
- Some verb phrases with two objects can't be passive at all:
*I **bear him** no ill will.*
*The book **earned him** a fortune.*
*Let me **wish you** luck.*
- Some verbs are followed by two nouns, but the second is not really an object. We can see this if it is replaced by an adjective:
*They **declared him** President.*
*He **was declared** President.*
*The doctor **declared him** dead.*
*He **was declared** dead.*



? check

Correct the following sentences.

- Man and wife they were pronounced.
- I was explained what I had to do.
- His previous misdemeanours were forgiven to him.
- He ~~was~~ earned a lot of money from his betting.
- We were suggested a good restaurant for lunch.

Practice

1 Fill each of the gaps in the following sentences with one of the passive verb phrases below.

*is deemed could soon be fitted were charged has been held
has finally been elected is expected being caused to be printed
is auctioned being considered*

- High-tech 'leg-irons' on violent suspects arrested by the police, under plans by chief constables.
- Last week, police in Scotland called for the introduction of leg-restraints following concerns about the number of injuries during struggles in the back of police cars and vans.
- Four people last night with public disorder offences after officers mounted dawn raids on suspected football hooligans.
- Hugh Hefner, founder of 'Playboy', to the American Society of Magazine Editors' Hall of Fame.
- A first edition copy of Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales', the first book in England, to raise at least £500,000 when it in July.
- A British woman released early from an attempted murder sentence in the United States – a charge which she has always denied – in prison because she an illegal immigrant.

2 Add the appropriate extra information (a–e) to the passive sentences (1–5).

- The news was leaked to the press by the minister ...
- The minister was attacked by protesters, ...
- I remember being sent a letter by a man in America ...
- The winning goal was scored by Fausto Ferrini ...
- A man was run over by a car, ...
 - in his first appearance for the club.
 - who had waited outside the building all day to voice their opposition to the policies.
 - in a deliberate attempt to boost his popularity.
 - who complained my article was prejudiced against his country.
 - which witnesses said was being driven at very high speed.

3 Where possible, rewrite each of the following sentences in two different ways, using a different subject each time. Some sentences may be rewritten only one way.

- The police showed the victim a picture of the suspect.
- People used to sell the tourists fake antiques.
- Why didn't they offer the customers a refund?
- They didn't guarantee every participant a free lunch.
- They reported the incident to the police.
- People suggested to us that the Internet would be a good source of information.
- They promised us full compensation if the scheme fell through.
- The referee declared the boxing match a draw.
- We'll give the new members of staff all the help they need.
- The incident earned him the reputation of being unreliable.

4 Fill each of the numbered blanks in the following passage with one suitable word.

Twenty-four hours after arriving in the country, I (1) told to leave. The security police, the country's largest employer, came to my hotel, politely asked me what I thought of the city and then recommended that I leave on the morning plane. I asked them why I was (2) expelled and they said it was not a question of my being '..... (3) out', they were simply recommending that I leave. I refused and the problems started. My passport and plane ticket (4) stolen from my room after my key 'disappeared'. The police shrugged their shoulders and decided not to interview the leather-jacketed youth who I (5) been pressed up against in the lift. For three days I was (6) by two not very secret policemen everywhere I went. I visited a fellow-journalist whose address I had (7) given. He lived in a beautiful old house which would (8) demolished the following year by the government to make way for a block of 'modern' flats. Everybody would be (9) in it as soon as it was ready but where they would live in the meantime had not been (10) out. Massive taxation was (11) imposed on the people to pay for these supposed improvements. I went back to the hotel, still (12) followed by the two policemen, and felt very depressed.

SECTION 2

Infinitives and -ing form passives

1 INFINITIVES AFTER CERTAIN VERBS

Make, see, hear, and help have different patterns in the active and the passive. In the active, the verb is followed by object + infinitive without *to*. In the passive, we use a *to*-infinitive:

Active	Passive
<i>I heard him shout at his brother.</i>	<i>He was heard to shout at his brother.</i>
<i>They've made him promise not to come before six.</i>	<i>He's been made to promise not to come before six.</i>

watch out!

Let v. allow

We can't use *let* in the passive when it is followed by a verb phrase. We use *allow*:

My parents let me do what I wanted. (= active)

✗ *I was let to do what I wanted.*

✓ *I was allowed to do what I wanted.*

- But we can use *let* in the passive in phrases like:
The dog was let loose. I was badly let down.

2 PASSIVE INFINITIVES

We form the passive infinitive of verbs by putting *to be* (sometimes *to get*) in front of the past participle:

Active	Passive
<i>There's so much to do.</i>	<i>There's so much to be done.</i>
<i>I've got to write this essay before Friday.</i>	<i>This essay has got to be written before Friday.</i>
<i>If I'm going to do it by then, I'd better get a move on.</i>	<i>If it's going to be done by then, I'd better get a move on.</i>

- We use Perfect passive infinitives to emphasise that something is or isn't completed (See also Unit 1, Section 2 Watch out!):
My new car was to have been delivered today but there was a problem with the paintwork.

Active or passive infinitive?

- If the subject is the agent, the sentence is active and we use an active infinitive:
I've got so many library books to return.

- If the subject is not the agent, we use a passive infinitive:

All systems are to be checked as soon as possible.

- We can use some active and passive infinitives with the same meaning, especially after *There*:
There are so many rooms to paint / to be painted.
- But, with *something, anything* and *nothing* + *to do* there can be a change in meaning:
There's nothing to do in the evenings. (= we're bored)
I'm sorry, there's nothing to be done. (= there's no action anyone can take)

3 REPORT VERBS

We often use report verbs, e.g. *claim, mention, request, point out*, with impersonal passive constructions.

There are three main patterns:

It's thought by the press that the chairman earns too much. The chairman is thought by the press to earn too much. There are thought to be disagreements among senior ministers.

- We often introduce a statement with *They say, think, believe*, etc. or *It is said... / One knows...*, etc. meaning 'People generally think, believe, etc. ...':
It's thought that carrots improve eyesight. (= Carrots are believed to improve eyesight.)

4 PASSIVE -ING FORMS

We use passive -ing forms (*being* + -ed) and Perfect passive -ing forms (*having been* + -ed):

- after verbs that are normally followed by -ing forms (see Unit 15):
I love being given flowers. She recalled having been taken there when she was young.
- as participles, usually with the meaning of 'because' (see Unit 6, Section 1):
Being paid monthly, I find annual bills hard to pay. Having been stung by bees, she has no love of insects.
- as the subject of a sentence:
Being proved wrong is never a comfortable experience.

? check

Underline the passives in these sentences.

- They are believed to have left the country.
- She is thought to have been smuggled out of the country in the back of a lorry.
- They were seen to leave the room together.
- He is said to be recovering well.
- The whole place was cleaned until there was not a speck of dust to be seen anywhere.

Practice

1 Fill each of the blanks with a suitable word.

Example: New measures to combat crime **are to be** introduced at the end of the year.

- We strongly advised reconsider our position.
- He is known hidden large sums of money in his orchard.
- They are understood have offered over £5000 for their story.
- I always made apologise to my little sister after an argument.
- It's too late now: there's nothing more be
- I left with the distinct feeling of been for granted.
- I used to steal walnuts from my grandfather's garden and never worried about out.
- There are any survivors from yesterday's air crash.

2 Finish each of the following sentences in such a way that it is as similar as possible to the sentence before it.

Example: Many people believe that Stonehenge was built as some kind of time-keeping device.
 Stonehenge **is believed by many people to have been built as some kind of time-keeping device.**

- They made me tell them everything I knew.
 I
- Nobody ever let me study the piano at school.
 I
- It is often said that Shakespeare never revised anything he wrote.
 Shakespeare
- There were once thought to be canals on Mars.
 It
- From what we understand, there was an attack last night in the vicinity of the beach.
 There is
- It's a widespread assumption that George was wrongly accused.
 George
- You have to clean these football boots until they shine.
 These football boots are
- Under no circumstances should you cross this line.
 This line is

3 For each of the sentences, write a new sentence as similar as possible in meaning to the original sentence, but using the word given.

Example: A lot of people are saying that he's working undercover. **rumoured**
 It's **rumoured** that he's working undercover. /
 He's **rumoured to be** working undercover.

- She wants it to be clear to people that she's fair.
seen
- He often says to people how much of his success is down to you.
heard
- The theory is that she fell overboard at night and drowned.
fallen
- We certainly don't want any repetition of such a ridiculous spectacle ever again.
repeated
- The plan was originally to complete the building by June.
due
- When I was a child, I was never allowed to play with the children next door.
let

4 Finish each of the following sentences in such a way that it is as similar as possible to the sentence before it.

Example: He didn't remember that he had been ordered to appear before the judge.
 He had no recollection of **being ordered to appear before the judge.**

- She vaguely remembers that she was knocked down by a motorbike.
 She has vague memories of
- It's never very nice when people laugh at you.
 Being
- Stewart was criticised for his extravagance and was more careful after that.
 Having
- I really wish I hadn't been pushed into giving a speech.
 I really regret
- Because I was told it was quicker, I naturally took the mountain road.
 Having
- I can't tell you what it feels like because nobody's ever given me £100,000.
 Never

SECTION 3

Structures with *get* and *have*

1 CAUSATIVES

We can use *get* and *have* in both active and passive patterns.

- The active pattern, meaning 'cause or order someone to do something', is *get* + person + to-infinitive, or *have* + person + infinitive without *to*:
I'll get the waiter to bring you the menu.
I'll have the waiter bring you the menu.

Note that *have* is much more common in American English; *get* is common in spoken British English.

- The passive pattern, meaning 'arrange for somebody else to do something', is *get* / *have* + object + past participle:
I'll have / get the menu brought to you.
I had to get / have my jacket cleaned after the party.
I must go and get / have my photo taken for my new passport.
I'll get / have those copies made for you immediately.
She's getting / having her teeth fixed.

2 GET + -ED: ACTIVE AND PASSIVE

We can sometimes use *get* instead of *be* in the passive. This is usually informal:

They got punished by the Principal for making so much noise.

Lucky Paul got promoted / elected / chosen / appointed yesterday.

Poor Vassili – his dog got run over last night.

- Get* meaning 'become' is also common with a particular small group of past participles:
get dressed get married get used to get stuck
get lost get caught get burned get involved
- The meaning of these phrases can be active:
I got dressed as quickly as I could.
- We can use some of these active phrases with an object:
I have to get the children dressed early every morning.
Don't get your family involved in the business.

3 THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO YOU

We use *have* + object + past participle to describe things that happen to us, often misfortunes. The subject is the person who experiences what happened:

I've had my car stolen. (Compare: *My car was stolen.*)

He's had his application for citizenship turned down.
 (Compare: *His application for citizenship has been turned down.*)

My mother's had her letter published in The Times.
 (Compare: *My mother's letter has been published in The Times.*)

- In spoken English we can sometimes use *get* instead of *have*:
She's got another letter published in The Times.
- Note that sometimes only the context will identify precise meaning. Consider:
They had their fence pulled down. (= either: they employed somebody to pull it down (causative); or it was pulled down without their planning it, e.g. by vandals.)



? check

Which of these sentences are causatives?

- He tried to escape but got caught.
- They were aiming to walk the entire route but got tired in the end.
- I need to get my hair cut. ✓
- I'm going to have my portrait painted. ✓
- I had my car broken into last week.

Practice

- 1** Fill each of the numbered blanks in the passage below with a form of *have* or *be*.

It was last May, while we were taking our annual late-spring break on Lindos that we (1) our house broken into. All our TV and video equipment (2) stolen, but what was worse was when we discovered that the final draft of my husband's latest novel (3) (4) torn into pieces and the disks he (5) (6) writing it on (7) disappeared. Of course, you hear about people who (8) (9) their properties vandalised and others whose most prized possessions (10) (11) taken, but it's a terrible shock when it happens to you, when you know that your home (12) (13) invaded, and that you (14) (15) your most intimate belongings handled and examined by strangers.

- 2** Finish each of the following sentences in such a way that it is as similar as possible in meaning to the sentence before it.

Example: Hasn't that film been developed yet?

Haven't you *had the film developed yet*?

- a Can it be true that you're really going to deliver my sofa today?
Can it be true that I'm
- b One of the others agreed to post my letters for me.
I got
- c My dentist is supposed to be capping my two front teeth this morning.
I'm
- d My car really needs servicing.
I really
- e Why did you let them go without signing the receipt?
Why didn't you

- 3** Fill the blanks with a suitable word or phrase.

Example: His arm is in a sling after he *got it stamped* on.

- a I keep getting headaches so I'm going tested.
- b It's unpleasant for children when they names by other children.
- c I've just taken for my new passport.
- d My handbag was completely flattened after it on in the bus.
- e My husband's been to the hairdresser: I really wish he so short.
- f I know you don't approve of my new hair colour but you'll just to it.

- 4** For each of the following sentences, write a new sentence as similar as possible in meaning to the original sentence, but using the word given. The words must not be altered in any way.

Example: Computing is just something you take for granted after a while. **get**

Computing is just something you get used to after a while.

- a The whole of my sister's class spent last weekend redecorating her flat.
had
- b We couldn't find our way out of the woods.
got
- c Do you think there's any chance of this new party winning the election?
get
- d I can't say I enjoy the teacher reading out my work in front of the class.
having
- e It's quite simple for a locksmith to copy one or more of your keys.
copied

- 5** Rearrange the words to make coherent sentences inside the first and last words given.

Example: film to has just be

That seen.

That film just has to be seen.

- a your ever your house belongings into any and had broken of you
Have stolen?
- b fingerprints police your on you never had files have can put you
Once relax.
- c something get got have done just about this to
You office.
- d your I not passport help would got have my for
But stamped.
- e us organised get at can the everything of all same
All time.
- f care any take to must such involved dangerous in family your not get
You situations.
- g arrested taxed if will get you car be almost and certainly don't your
You insured.
- h interest government seems to never to brought get under able rates be
The control.

SECTION 4

Not using the passive: transitive to intransitive

1 CHANGING THE SUBJECT WITHOUT USING THE PASSIVE

With some transitive verbs we can change the subject of a sentence without using the passive. We don't mention or even imply an agent. Verbs that allow us to change the subject to 'the thing affected by the action' without using the passive are called 'ergative' verbs. By changing the subject of the sentence in this way, the active transitive verb becomes intransitive:

The dog opened the door. (= active) *The door was opened by the dog.* (= passive) *The door opened.* (ergative – as if the door opened by itself)

- Here are more examples of ergative verbs:
The whistle blew. *That jumper does up at the neck.*
The car crashed into a post. *The soup thickened.*

2 MEANINGS OF THESE VERBS

Describing change

Most verbs that we can use in this way describe change of some kind:

Transitive	Non-passive intransitive
<i>This book will change your life.</i>	<i>His life changed completely when he moved to Denmark.</i>
<i>The sun had dried their clothes by the time they got home.</i>	<i>Their clothes had dried by the time they got home.</i>
<i>She broke her pencil because she was pressing too hard.</i>	<i>Her pencil broke because she was pressing too hard.</i>

- Other examples include:
begin vary decrease expand increase open close finish fade stretch crack smash

watch out!

We can't use all verbs describing change in this way. For example, *destroy* and *demolish* must stay transitive:

✗ *The old building demolished.*

✓ *They demolished the old building. The old building was demolished.*

Describing movement

Other verbs that we can use in this way describe movement of some kind:

Transitive	Non-passive intransitive
<i>He reversed the car into the garage.</i>	<i>A car reversed round the corner.</i>
<i>The pilot landed the plane on only one engine.</i>	<i>The plane landed on time.</i>
<i>He moved his chair closer to hers.</i>	<i>That new restaurant has moved.</i>

- Other examples include:
turn stop fill shake spin sail tip shift bounce

Cooking

Another group of verbs that we can use in this way relate to cooking:

Transitive	Non-passive intransitive
<i>Dissolve the mixture in a little water.</i>	<i>Stir until the sugar has dissolved.</i>
<i>Simmer the stock for an hour.</i>	<i>After the stock has simmered for an hour, add seasoning.</i>

- Other examples include:
bake boil cook fry melt toast thicken burn heat up cool down warm brown freeze thaw

3 OTHER EXAMPLES OF ERGATIVE VERBS

She photographs very well. (= she is photogenic)

Her voice records well. (= her voice sounds good on tape)

Will this stain wash out? (= Will the stain disappear with washing?)

Your composition reads well. (= your style is very good)

Black jeans are selling well. (= many people are buying them)

This skirt creases so easily. (= the skirt becomes creased very quickly)

? check

Which of the following sentences are incorrect?

- The light has destroyed the photograph.
- Raise your hand if you know the answer.
- The photograph destroyed because of the light.
- The photograph was destroyed in the fire.
- The treasure was raised to the surface.
- The hot air balloon raised quickly into the sky.

Practice

1 In the following pairs of sentences, a, b or both are correct. Put a cross (X) next to every sentence that is incorrect. Write the correction.

Example: a Drop a line when you get there.

b He was upset to discover he dropped from the team. (X) (*had been / was dropped*)

- 1 a The Titanic was sunk by an iceberg.
b The boat sank without trace.
- 2 a This shirt dries extremely quickly.
b Her hair soon dried by the wind.
- 3 a The hole soon filled with water.
b The room was filled with hundreds of people.
- 4 a The western shore washed by warm currents.
b Fertile soil washes down into the valleys.
- 5 a My dress ripped when it caught in the car door.
b His newspaper had been ripped into shreds.
- 6 a The sacked workers compensated for the loss of earnings.
b He was compensated for his injuries.
- 7 a My chair tipped backwards until it fell over.
b All the left-overs were tipped into a bin liner.
- 8 a Inflation was increased over the last six months.
b My salary was increased by just over 5%.
- 9 a They've expanded production facilities at the old factory.
b Metal is expanded when heated.
- 10 a The white Mercedes turned into the car park.
b The sign had been turned to face the opposite direction.

2 Rewrite each of the following sentences changing the object to subject without using the passive. Add any prepositional phrases necessary.

Example: The sun has melted the chocolate.

The chocolate has melted in the sun.

- a The DJ dimmed the lights during the last dance.
- b Darren improved his performance in the 100 metres by a tenth of a second.
- c An iceberg sank the Titanic in 1911.
- d Tears filled his eyes.
- e The committee gradually developed the plan.

3 For each of the following sentences, write a new sentence as similar as possible in meaning to the original sentence, but using the word given.

Example: The first act of your play is very well written. **reads**

The first act of your play reads very well.

- a Initially, I think you develop the plot very convincingly.
unfolds
- b You step up the tension in the third scene.
increases
- c But then everything seems different.
change
- d You put in melodrama instead of real drama, don't you?
replaces
- e Why do you close the first act with only a vague suspicion of murder in the air?
does
- f Why don't you open the second act with the actual killing?
doesn't
- g And why does the third act end on such an anti-climax?
do
- h It's difficult to see tickets being bought for a play like this.
selling

4 Fill each of the gaps in these extracts from a report with an appropriate word from the list.

Example: The amount we can spend on technical equipment has fortunately **increased**.

grown expanded fallen contracted widened intensified folded changed dried (increased)

- a It's sad that the number of students considering a career in teaching has off a lot.
- b Consequently, the teacher training faculty has by about 25%.
- c Attitudes towards the teaching profession have considerably.
- d However, in other departments options have greatly.
- e Inevitably some departments have completely.
- f Interest in Latin, for example, has up.
- g And competition with other colleges has, it must be admitted,
- h But, the curriculum has into new areas such as media studies.
- i Interest in computer studies has beyond all expectations.

Unit two

Vocabulary

SECTION 5

Verbs we commonly use in the passive

1 VERBS WITHOUT AN AGENT

We use some verbs more often in the passive than in the active because the agent is either unknown or obvious, or not important to what we want to say:

I was born in Italy.

My neighbour's been arrested!

She was fined £100 for driving without insurance.

Stockholm has been dubbed the Venice of the North.

A reminder will be sent by post.

The stadium was built in 1983.

1 Add one of these passive verbs to the sentences below. Make any necessary changes.

*be deemed be earmarked be baffled be jailed
be strewn*

- a Their work to be of the highest standard.
- b The murderer should for life.
- c The floor had with newspapers and old magazines.
- d I completely and had no idea what had happened.
- e The building has for demolition.

2 ADJECTIVE OR PASSIVE?

Some verbs are so commonly used in the passive, without mentioning an agent, that they work in a similar way to -ed adjectives (see Overview, Watch out!):

I heard the news and was horrified.

Tuscan truffles are particularly prized for their pungent aroma.

I'm gutted! (slang = I'm very upset)

3 PREPOSITIONS

Some common passive verbs collocate with particular prepositions. Here are some examples:

The threat was couched in the vaguest possible terms.

We've been conditioned into accepting TV as essential.

The athlete was acclaimed as a national hero.

The old man has been indicted as a war criminal.

I don't think any of these remarks could be construed as positive.

I've been swamped with requests to do concerts all over Europe.

2 Add a suitable preposition to these sentences.

- a The factory is scheduled demolition next year.
- b The little boy was eventually reunited his parents.
- c These three chapters could be subsumed a new heading.
- d I've been shortlisted the Noble Prize for Literature!

4 NO PREPOSITION

Some common passive verbs, e.g. *be called*, *be named*, *be deemed*, *be dubbed*, are not commonly followed by a preposition:

All his efforts were deemed a complete waste of public resources.

I've been called many things in my life but never 'inspired'.

5 PHRASAL VERBS

We also commonly use particular phrasal verbs in the passive:

This coat was handed down to me by my older brother.

I was so caught up in my book that I failed to realise the time.

The get-out clause was written into their contract.

Practice

1 Match the beginnings of the sentences (1–10) with a suitable ending (a–j).

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 The condemned man was reprieved | a for complaining to the referee. |
| 2 I was completely mesmerised | b by experienced machine operators. |
| 3 The old man was paralysed | c as aggressive. |
| 4 Both players were penalised | d at the last moment. |
| 5 I've been swamped | e for next Friday. |
| 6 The meeting has been scheduled | f by his performance. |
| 7 Ioannis was somewhat disconcerted | g by the lack of response. |
| 8 His behaviour was in danger of being construed | h with offers of help. |
| 9 She was hospitalised | i down one side after the stroke. |
| 10 The factory is staffed | j for three months after the accident. |

2 Fill each of the gaps with the most appropriate word from the list.

*haunted touched locked earmarked buffeted possessed hounded
blessed doomed destined handicapped dogged*

Jack, he's so unlucky: (1) by misfortune, (2) by fate at every turn and (3) by memories of the past, (4) in a battle with his family, (5) by the police and severely (6) by facial features straight out of a horror movie, he's (7) to failure.

Jill is so different: (8) with an ability to get on with everyone, (9) with genius, already (10) by her company for a top job and (11) to be a success in whatever she does, she's (12) of just about every quality Jack lacks.

3 Fill each of the gaps in the following sentences with an appropriate verb from the list. The verbs should be used in the passive.

*overcome deemed inundated dwarfed dubbed shrouded scheduled
baffled strewn short-listed*

- The ex-champion by heat exhaustion in the final and was unable to finish the match.
- How the intelligence services work in secrecy.
- Since the film came out, I with requests for my autograph.
- His house in the foothills by the surrounding mountains.
- Their new CD for release next January.
- All the doctors we saw by the reason for her illness.
- I'm afraid your recent work totally inadequate for the task.
- Believe it or not, last month a news reader the sexiest man on television.
- Many people think a nineteen-year-old's first novel should for last year's National Literature prize.
- When the police arrived, the victim's clothes all over the room.

4 For each of the following sentences, write a new sentence as similar as possible in meaning to the original sentence, but using the word given. This word must not be altered in any way.

- Since the advertisement, we've had more applications than we can deal with.
swamped
- Do you feel it's wrong that this site is going to be redeveloped?
earmarked
- The Minister's response really took the interviewer by surprise.
aback
- The rain forced the protest march to be cancelled.
rained
- There is someone in the office twenty-four hours a day.
staffed
- I wasn't sure what to do when the bereaved woman started laughing.
disconcerted
- Each new generation is told the secret recipe.
down
- The Trade Centre towers over the surrounding buildings.
dwarfed
- The Government's fiscal policy came in for sharp criticism in the press.
pilloried
- You cannot easily put all this information under one heading.
subsumed

SECTION 6

Phrasal verbs; verb + preposition

1 PHRASAL VERB, OR VERB + PREPOSITION?

Phrasal verbs are verbs which are always followed by an adverb, e.g. *cloud over*, a preposition, e.g. *come across sth / sb*, or an adverb and a preposition, e.g. *creep up on sth / sb*. The meaning of a phrasal verb is sometimes obvious from the meanings of its parts, e.g. *fall down*. But the meaning is often more idiomatic and so less obvious, e.g. *put up with sb / sth*. Phrasal verbs can be either transitive or intransitive:

When you get to the next crossroads, turn off.

Would you turn off the radio, please.

- A preposition can sometimes follow a verb which is not a phrasal verb. The preposition is part of a prepositional phrase:
Who lives across the road?
- Some prepositions commonly follow certain verbs because of meanings and collocation:
This broken plate will have to be paid for.
What are you looking at?

1 Which of these two sentences contains a phrasal verb?

- The marathon runners ran over the bridge towards the finish line.
- My friend's cat was run over by an ambulance.

2 POSITION OF OBJECT

- When a phrasal verb is transitive, we can place a noun object before or after the adverb:
Please turn the radio off. Please turn off the radio.
- When the object is a pronoun, it is always placed before the adverb:
Please turn it off.
- With a verb + preposition, the preposition is placed before its object. We can't put the object between a verb and a preposition:
I've come into money.
I came into it when my father died.
- Verbs + adverb + preposition behave in the same way as verbs + preposition:
You'll have to put up with them for a little longer.

2 Which of these sentences contains a phrasal verb?

- I think somebody has been gnawing at this biscuit.
- If you don't mind, we need to think this over.

3 PREPOSITIONS AFTER PASSIVES

Note that many prepositions can follow passive verbs. However, the most common are *by* (used to mention the agent), *with* (used to mention how something is done or what it is done with) and *in*:

They're being cared for by a neighbour.

It was prepared with great patience.

Man was first discovered in East Africa.

- We use other prepositions when the meaning or verb + preposition collocation requires them:
Money has been contributed towards the costs.

3 Choose the preposition which best completes this sentence.

Any gain must be balanced any potential loss.

a towards b to c against d for

- Some prepositions of movement make passive transformations difficult. In these cases, we use other verbs:
They all ran laughing into the room.
~~✗ The room was run into.~~
✓ *The room was soon filled with people laughing.*

Practice

1 Choose the preposition that best completes each sentence.

- My attention was drawn the picture on the far wall.
a with b to c for d on
- The stolen paintings were eventually restored their rightful owner.
a for b by c to d with
- Italy were knocked the World Cup.
a into b away from c out of d forward to
- The argument is centred whether or not to lower the age limit.
a on b towards c of d about
- Emphasis is placed practical training.
a over b with c by d on
- The younger sons consider themselves to have been robbed their rightful inheritance.
a by b with c around d of
- The discussion will be divided three parts for the sake of clarity.
a to b for c into d with
- The white Audi was eliminated police enquiries at an early stage.
a with b from c of d for

- 9 A whole host of criticisms have been levelled the committee.
a against b towards c by d for
- 10 The final cost has been estimated anything between four and five million dollars.
a against b to c at d in

2 Fill each of the gaps with a suitable passive verb in such a way that the new sentence is as similar in meaning as possible to the sentence above it.

- a They *moved towards* the piazza from all sides.
The piazza from all sides.
- b The two sides *came to* an agreement after hours of negotiation.
Agreement after hours of negotiation.
- c The men *poured* concrete into the hole until it was full.
The hole with concrete.
- d People *came into* the room through a sort of tunnel.
The room through a sort of tunnel.
- e Everyone *got out of* the stadium as the fire spread.
The stadium as the fire spread.

3 Underline the word that best fits the sentence.

- 1 Do you think he could be upon to make a speech after the presentation?
a prevailed b impelled c urged d pressured
- 2 I'm afraid a penalty clause has been written your contract.
a out of b into c down d away for
- 3 I was completely over by their warm reception.
a pushed b run c bowled d thrown
- 4 I think the implications have been rather quickly over.
a painted b removed c sprayed d glossed
- 5 A number of very interesting proposals have been put
a across b down c forward d through

4 Finish each of the following sentences in such a way that it is as similar as possible to the sentence before it.

- a The sports centre presents a certificate of attendance to every student when they leave.
All
- b I don't think they should have pressure put on them to make a decision.
I don't think they should be

- c The price is exclusive of airport taxes.
Airport taxes
- d The way the managing director behaved last night really shocked me.
I
- e Several people came up to me to congratulate me.
I
- f I grew up in a little village on the Scottish border.
I was
- g The letters will have your name printed on them.
The letters will be
- h The couple didn't tell the police about the theft until it was far too late.
The theft
- i An old woman once tricked my father into giving her several hundred pounds.
My father was once conned out
- j Government guidelines really do emphasise the importance of starting education early.
A lot of emphasis

5 For each of the sentences below, write a new sentence as similar as possible in meaning to the original sentence, but using the word given.

- a An awful lot has been omitted from the final draft of the agreement.
out
- b There were thousands of sunbathers on the beach.
packed
- c Our founder was given an honorary doctorate in law by Edinburgh University.
conferred
- d My uncle underwent a five-hour operation to remove the growth that had been diagnosed.
operated
- e My watch and traveller's cheques were stolen while I was abroad.
robbed
- f The accused claimed he hit the police officer as a result of provocation.
provoked
- g Both parties ripped the contract to pieces.
torn
- h Many of us were shocked when a former actor took the oath as President of the United States.
sworn
- i The present came as a complete surprise to me.
aback
- j Trading activities in the war-stricken area have been reduced.
scaled



Exam practice 2

1 Circle a letter **A, B, C** or **D** that best fills each numbered gap.

A popular character in the nation's top television soap is (1) for something of which she was probably innocent. Having been (2) guilty of a series of fraudulent acts, she contemplates months of incarceration. A good story-line, but wait! Within hours the television station is being (3) with calls of protest. A national newspaper soon (4) up a campaign to have her freed. Thousands of T-shirts are printed with slogans (5) for her release. Offices and factory floors (6) to the sounds of animated debate. It is even mentioned in Parliament. It's easy to (7) off such idiocies as 'a bit of fun', but there's surely a more serious side. A fair proportion of viewers were obviously (8) in by the story to such an extent that their perception of fact and fiction was clearly (9). Everywhere, millions will (10) over their 7-day TV guide to get a preview of the week's soaps. If a character is (11) to be past his or her sell-by date, and the decision has been taken to (12) him or her out, possibly to have them (13) off in spectacular fashion, viewing figures are likely to soar by up to 25%. A life-threatening fire can be (14) upon to add millions to the ratings. A major wedding can find half of Britain sitting (15) to the screen! It's all very strange.

- | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1 A jailed | B prisoned | C sentenced | D charged |
| 2 A arrested | B called | C found | D discovered |
| 3 A bombed | B attacked | C streamed | D inundated |
| 4 A opens | B starts | C puts | D establishes |
| 5 A demanding | B calling | C insisting | D sounding |
| 6 A echo | B ring | C fill | D deafen |
| 7 A laugh | B smile | C take | D put |
| 8 A thrown | B carried | C indulged | D taken |
| 9 A blurred | B hampered | C tampered | D glossed |
| 10 A flick | B go | C pore | D sit |
| 11 A decided | B resolved | C deemed | D suspected |
| 12 A write | B cast | C sort | D work |
| 13 A ridden | B taken | C driven | D killed |
| 14 A leaned | B construed | C relied | D improved |
| 15 A swamped | B stuck | C paralysed | D glued |

SCORE _____

2 Fill each of the numbered blanks in the passage with **one** suitable word.

After living (1) the threat of extinction for more than 30 years, the national bird of the United States has (2) granted an official reprieve, as the bald eagle and twenty-eight other animal and plant species have been earmarked (3) removal from America's list of endangered species. The bald eagle, also (4) as the white-headed sea eagle, took pride of place at the top of a list of species likely to (5) taken off the endangered register in the coming years. The proposed 'delistings' are (6) promoted (7) the US interior secretary to counter a growing feeling among Republicans that endangered-species laws do not work. Charges of ineffectiveness have been (8) against these laws before, but more recently it has (9) been suggested that the situation may actually have been (10) worse by them. The recovery of the bald eagle follows thirty-one years on the critical list. Its numbers had been (11) to fewer than five hundred (12) the use of pesticides that reacted adversely (13) its reproductive system. The number of nesting pairs is now estimated (14) five thousand. The interior secretary claims



that the new list was a vindication of the legislation under which the eagle, a national symbol (15) originally from the Indians, and more than a thousand other species (16) protected. (A spokesperson denied that it was simply a publicity stunt timed to coincide (17) the swearing (18) of the president for his second term.) Until now, few species have (19) been removed from the list. When they (20), it was usually because they had become extinct.

SCORE _____

3 Finish each of the following sentences in such a way that it is as similar as possible in meaning to the sentence above it.

- a** Do not switch off unless the screen shows 'Ready for Shutdown'.
This machine is only
- b** It's over a year since anyone saw William.
William
- c** It's too early to send anything off to shareholders.
Nothing
- d** The calculation would have baffled me completely if it had not been for your help.
I
- e** We want justice and we need to see it carried out.
Justice must not
- f** I'd never let anyone use a photograph of my children in an advertisement.
I'd never have
- g** The driver was fined especially heavily because of his several previous convictions.
Having been
- h** The manageress often made us stay behind after closing time to do extra work.
We
- i** The investigators think a fault in the fuel lines caused the crash.
A fault
- j** They've had to fax the insurance company three times for a decision.
The insurance company

SCORE _____

4 Fill each of the blanks with a suitable word or phrase.

- a** The origins of the tribe in mystery.
- b** Everyone aback by the public reaction to the news about the President.
- c** It's six months since the tests, and she still the all-clear by her consultant.
- d** Mr Bennett's office has 'the torture chamber' by his staff.
- e** In my family, a lot of furniture down from generation to generation.
- f** Look – it's all over the papers. You should never be photographed in such a compromising situation.

SCORE _____

5 For each of the sentences below, write a new sentence as similar as possible in meaning to the original sentence, but using the word given. This word must not be altered in any way.

- a** The accused became very emotional.
overcome
- b** Naturally, they will deduct points if you arrive late.
penalised
- c** The model's clothes lay all over the floor.
strewn
- d** Our new Director wants you to call her 'Madam'.
addressed
- e** I can't say I enjoy it when people tear my writing to pieces in front of me.
having
- f** We'll have to make up our minds by the end of the week, won't we?
be
- g** It's just possible the hotel may need more staff in the summer.
ruled
- h** Surely nobody likes it when people make fun of them in public.
being
- i** Never forget that the customer is always right.
borne
- j** This school-leaver's qualifications are not adequate for such a demanding job, are they?
sufficiently

SCORE _____

TOTAL SCORE _____