

● The passive / the causative / direct and indirect objects

The passive

Form	noun + be in the correct form + past participle (+ by/with + noun)	
	Active	Passive
present simple	<i>They grow bananas in tropical areas.</i>	<i>am/is/are + past participle Bananas <b>are grown</b> in tropical areas.</i>
present continuous	<i>They are redecorating the café.</i>	<i>am/is/are + -ing + past participle The café <b>is being redecorated</b>.</i>
present perfect simple	<i>Has anyone peeled the carrots?</i>	<i>has/have + been + past participle <b>Have</b> the carrots <b>been peeled</b>?</i>
past simple	<i>They served the meal in an elegant dining room.</i>	<i>was/were + past participle The meal <b>was served</b> in an elegant dining room.</i>
past continuous	<i>We asked for coffee while they were preparing the bill.</i>	<i>was/were + -ing + past participle We asked for coffee while the bill <b>was being prepared</b>.</i>
past perfect simple	<i>Someone had eaten all the food by the time I got there.</i>	<i>has + been + past participle All the food <b>had been eaten</b> by the time I got there.</i>
will future	<i>We will deliver your pizza in forty minutes.</i>	<i>will + be + past participle Your pizza <b>will be delivered</b> in forty minutes.</i>
be going to future	<i>Overweight customers are going to sue Burgerland.</i>	<i>is/are going to + be + past participle Burgerland <b>is going to be sued</b> by overweight customers.</i>
future perfect simple	<i>They will have harvested all the grapes by the end of September.</i>	<i>will + have + been + past participle All the grapes <b>will have been harvested</b> by the end of September.</i>
modal	<i>You should brush the chicken breast with oil and then fry it.</i>	<i>modal + be + past participle The chicken breast <b>should be brushed</b> with oil and then fried.</i>
modal + perfect infinitive	<i>They should have delivered the groceries by now.</i>	<i>modal + have + been + past participle The groceries <b>should have been delivered</b> by now.</i>
-ing (gerund)	<i>I don't like people telling me what to do in the kitchen.</i>	<i>being + past participle I don't like <b>being told</b> what to do in the kitchen.</i>

  

Use	Example
When we don't know who does/did something	<i>My groceries <b>have been stolen</b>!</i>
When it's obvious who does/did something	<i>A boy <b>was arrested</b> in town yesterday for stealing an apple.</i>
When it's not important who does/did something	<i>The French bistro <b>is being knocked down</b>.</i>
When we want to emphasise new information or use a formal style	<i>The potato <b>was brought</b> to Europe by Sir Walter Raleigh.</i>

Watch out!

- We do not normally use verbs in the passive in the present perfect continuous, past perfect continuous, future continuous or future perfect continuous tenses. Instead, we use a different phrase.
  - ✓ *The restaurant **has been under construction** for four years.*
  - ✗ *The restaurant **has been being built** for four years.*
  - ✓ *Dave **has been in training** as a chef for three years.*
  - ✗ *Dave **has been being trained** as a chef for three years.*
- We only normally use 'by' to say who did something when it is important information.
  - ✓ *Margarine was invented **by** a French chef.*
  - ✓ *The best pizzas are made **by** the Italians.*
  - ✗ *Waiter! This steak **has been overcooked by** someone.*
- We usually use 'with' when we talk about the thing used to do something.
  - ✓ *The soup should then be stirred **with** a spoon.*
  - ✗ *The soup should then be stirred **by** a spoon.*
- Some verbs are not normally used in the passive. They include intransitive verbs (without objects), such as *appear* and *die*, and some common transitive verbs, such as *have*, *let*, *lack*, etc.