



## 5. PAST SIMPLE PASSIVE tense (P.S.P.t)

### i. USAGES of PASSIVE:

⇒ Passive voice is used when the focus is on the action. It is not important or not known, however, who or what is performing the action.

Example: My bike was stolen.

In the example above, the focus is on the fact that my bike was stolen. I do not know, however, who did it.

Sometimes a statement in passive is more polite than active voice, as the following example shows:

Example: A mistake was made.

® In this case, I focus on the fact that a mistake was made, but I do not blame anyone (e.g. You have made a mistake.).

### II. FORM OF PASSIVE:

+ **Positive:** Subject + was / were + past participle (3<sup>rd</sup> column of irregular verbs).

Examples: A letter was written.  
These emails were translated.

- **Negative:** Subject + was / were + not + past participle (3<sup>rd</sup> column of irregular verbs).

Examples: That food wasn't eaten.  
The pictures were not drawn.

?? **Question:** Was / Were + Subject + past participle (3<sup>rd</sup> column of irregular verbs)?

Examples: Was your phone lost?  
Were your keys washed?

A. **Short Answer:**

Yes, + Subject + was./ were.  
No, + Subject + wasn't./ weren't.

Examples: Yes, it was. No, it wasn't.  
Yes, they were. No, they weren't.



When rewriting active sentences in passive voice, note the following:

- the object of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence
- the finite form of the verb is changed (*to be* + past participle)
- the subject of the active sentence becomes the object of the passive sentence (or is dropped)

Examples of Passive ●●○○○

Tense		Subject	Verb	Object
Past Simple	Active:	Tita	Wrote	a letter.
	Passive:	A letter	was written	by Tita.
	Active:	Sam Ean	Typed	a computer.
	Passive:	A computer	was typed	by Sam Ean.

Passive Sentences with Two Objects ●●●○○

- ® Rewriting an active sentence with two objects in passive voice means that one of the two objects becomes the subject, the other one remains an object. Which object to transform into a subject depends on what you want to put the focus on.

	Subject	Verb	Object 1	Object 2
Active:	Rita	wrote	a letter	to me.
Passive:	A letter	was written	to me	by Rita.
Passive:	I	was written	a letter	by Rita.

- ® As you can see in the examples, adding *by Rita* does not sound very elegant. That's why it is usually dropped.

**Personal and Impersonal Passive**

- ® *Personal Passive* simply means that the object of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence. So every verb that needs an object (transitive verb) can form a personal passive.

Example: They built houses. - Houses were built.



- ® Verbs without an object (intransitive verb) normally cannot form a personal passive sentence (as there is no object that can become the subject of the passive sentence). If you want to use an intransitive verb in passive voice, you need an impersonal construction - therefore this passive is called *Impersonal Passive*.

Example: He said. - It was said.

- ® *Impersonal Passive* is not as common in English as in some other languages (e.g. German, Latin). In English, *Impersonal Passive* is only possible with verbs of perception (e. g. say, think, know).

Example: They said that women lived longer than men. - It was said that women lived longer than men.

- ® Although *Impersonal Passive* is possible here, *Personal Passive* is more common.

Example: They said that women lived longer than men. - Women were said to lived longer than men.

- ® The subject of the subordinate clause (women) goes to the beginning of the sentence; the verb of perception is put into passive voice. The rest of the sentence is added using an infinitive construction with 'to' (certain auxiliary verbs and *that* are dropped).
- ® Sometimes the term *Personal Passive* is used in English lessons if the indirect object of an active sentence is to become the subject of the passive sentence.

#### EXERCISES PRACTICE:

##### i. Write passive sentences in Simple Past.

1. the test / write ..... The test was written.
2. the table / set .....
3. the cat / feed .....
4. the lights / switch on .....
5. the house / build .....
6. dinner / serve .....
7. this computer / sell / not .....
8. the car / stop / not .....
9. the tables / clean / not .....
10. the children / pick up / not .....



ii. Rewrite the sentences in passive voice.

1. She sang a song. - ..... A song was sung by her. .....
2. Somebody hit me. - .....
3. We stopped the bus. - .....
4. A thief stole my car. - .....
5. They didn't let him go. - .....
6. She didn't win the prize. - .....
7. They didn't make their beds. - .....
8. I did not tell them. - .....
9. Did you tell them? - .....
10. Did he send the letter? - .....

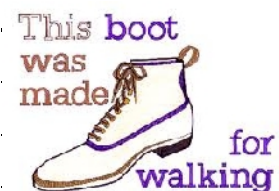
iii. Complete the sentences (Active or Passive Voice). Use Simple Past.

1. They (visit) ..... visited ..... their granny.
2. We (visit) ..... were visited ..... by our teacher.
3. My friend Paul (bear) ..... in Dallas.
4. She (go) ..... to school in Boston.
5. Antony (grow up) ..... in the country.
6. The new shopping centre (build) ..... last year.
7. The film (produce / not) ..... in Hollywood.
8. Barbara (know) ..... James very well.
9. The jewels (hide / not) ..... in the cellar.
10. We (spend / not) ..... all day on the beach.

iv. Use these verbs to create your own sentences in past simple passive.

play	discuss	make	bite	wear	pour
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1. .... The boot was made for walking. .....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....





## Grammatical Detail pRaCTiCe

GT|PS|PC|PPS|PPC|PSP|PCP|PPSP|PPCP|  
PrS|PrC|PrPS|PrPC|PrSP|PrCP|PrPSP|PrPCP| |FT



### v. Fill the gaps with the correct tenses (active or passive voice).

1. In the year 122 AD, the Roman Emperor Hadrian (visit) Visited his provinces in Britain.
2. On his visit, the Roman soldiers (tell)..... him that Pictish tribes from Britain's north (attack)..... them.
3. So Hadrian (give)..... the order to build a protective wall across one of the narrowest parts of the country.
4. After 6 years of hard work, the Wall (finish)..... in 128.
5. It (be)..... 117 kilometres long and about 4 metres high.
6. The Wall (guard)..... by 15,000 Roman soldiers.
7. Every 8 kilometres there (be)..... a large fort in which up to 1,000 soldiers (find)..... shelter.
8. The soldiers (watch)..... over the frontier to the north and (check)..... the people who (want)..... to enter or leave Roman Britain.
9. In order to pass through the Wall, people (must go)..... to one of the small forts that (serve) ..... as gateways.
10. Those forts (call) ..... mile castles because the distance from one fort to another (be)..... one Roman mile (about 1,500 metres).
11. Between the mile castles there (be)..... two turrets from which the soldiers (guard) ..... the Wall.
12. If the Wall (attack) ..... by enemies, the soldiers at the turrets (run) ..... to the nearest mile castle for help or (light) ..... a fire that (can / see)..... by the soldiers in the mile castle.
13. In 383 Hadrian's Wall (abandon).....
14. Today Hadrian's Wall (be) ..... the most popular tourist attraction in northern England.
15. In 1987, it (become) ..... a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



vi. **Rewrite these sentences beginning with the underlined words**

Example: Thieves robbed a woman

→ A woman was robbed

1. They watched the film.

2. We needed to correct the mistakes.

3. They were testing a new drug.

4. We didn't use the machine for ages.

5. The police arrested 12 people.

vii. **Fill in the passive voice (simple past tense).**

How a film (make).....

1. First a producer (appoint) ..... by a film studio.

2. A scriptwriter (choose) ..... and the script (write) .....

3. The actors (hire) ..... and they learn their roles by heart.  
They (tell)..... how to act by a director.

4. The location to shoot the film (choose) ....., the settings and  
the costumes (make).....

5. The camera and the microphones (install) .....

6. The film (shoot) .....and the dialogues (record) .....

7. The film (edit) .....and the soundtrack is (add) .....

8. The film (process) ..... and copies (send) .....  
to cinemas all over the world.

9. There it can (see) ..... by the public.

viii. **Please complete in each sentence with past tense whether they are Active or passive**

1. Leonardo da Vinci (paint) ..... **painted** ..... Mona Lisa.

2. The best Whisky (make) ..... in Scotland.

3. The flowers (water) .....every day.

4. He (write) .....me a letter last week.

5. The film (make) .....in Britain.

6. They (give) .....him a present.

7. The telephone (invent) ..... by Bell.

8. She (phone) ..... him every day.

9. The car (clean) .....once a week.

10. What (this – use) .....for?