The passive voice

The passive voice is a grammatical construction used in English to change the focus of a sentence from the subject performing the action to the object receiving the action. It is formed by rearranging the word order of a sentence and using a form of the verb **"to be"** (e.g., is, was, has been) along with the **past participle** of the main verb. Here's a detailed grammar explanation of the passive voice:

Structure: (Subject + verb to be + past participle + rest of sentence)

The passive voice consists of the following elements:

- Subject (Receiver of the action)
- Appropriate form of "to be" (e.g., is, was, has been)
- Past participle of the main verb
- Optional agent (the "by" phrase), which indicates who or what is performing the action (if needed)

Example: "The cake (subject) was (form of "to be") baked (past participle) by Mary (agent)."



Active vs. passive voice:

In active voice, the subject of the sentence performs the action, and the structure is straightforward:

- **Example (Active Voice):** "Mary (subject) baked (verb) a cake (object)."

In passive voice, the subject of the sentence receives the action, and the structure is rearranged:

- **Example (Passive Voice):** "The cake (subject) was (form of "to be") baked (past participle) by Mary (agent)."

When to use the passive voice:

The passive voice is used in various situations:

- When the doer of the action is unknown or unimportant: **Example:** "The book was stolen from my bag." (We don't know who stole it.)
- To emphasise the receiver of the action. **Example:** "The proposal was accepted by the committee."
- In formal or academic writing.
- When the doer of the action is implied or obvious. **Example:** “The criminal was arrested” It is obvious that the police arrested the criminal.
- To create a more objective or neutral tone.
- To shift the focus from the "doer" to the "receiver" of the action.

Forming passive tenses:

To form the passive voice in different tenses you need to adjust the form of the verb **"to be".**

Examples:

- **Present:** "The report **is** written by the team."
- **Past:** "The letter **was** sent yesterday."
- **Future:** "The package **will be** delivered tomorrow."
- **Present Perfect:** "The document **has been** completed."
- **Past Perfect:** "The work **had been** finished before the deadline."
- **Future Perfect:** "The project **will have been** completed by next month."

The passive voice exercise 1:

Choose the correct answer

1. The flowers _____ by Jane every morning.
a) watered
b) waters
c) are watered

2. The movie _____ at the cinema tonight.
a) will be shown
b) is shown
c) will show

3. This book ___ to me by my teacher.
a) given
b) was given
c) gave

4. The tickets ___ by the time we got to the theater.
a) are sold
b) sold
c) had been sold

5. The Mona Lisa ___ by Leonardo da Vinci.
a) was painted
b) painted
c) paints

6. The keys ___ on the kitchen table.
a) were leave
b) leave
c) were left

7. The problem ___ by the team soon.
a) will be solved
b) was solved
c) will solve

8. The car _____ by the mechanic.
a) is repairing
b) is being repaired
C) repaired

9. The story _____ in ancient times.
a) tells
b) told
c) was told

10. London city _____ by many tourists every year.
a) is visiting
b) was visited
c) is visited



The passive voice exercise 2:

Complete the conversation between Alex and Chris with the passive voice using the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

Samantha: (1) _____ **(you/invite)** to the conference next week?

Robert: Yes, I **(2)** _____**(invite)**. It **(3)** _____**(organise)** by our company.

Samantha: That's interesting! I heard the speakers **(4)** _____**(select)** carefully.

Robert: Yes, they **(5)** _____**(choose)** for their expertise in various fields.

Samantha: What time **(6)** _____ **(it/hold)?**

Robert: The conference **(7)**_____ **(hold)** at the convention center downtown.

Samantha: I hope I **(8)** _____ **(include)** in the list of attendees. It sounds like it's going to be an informative event.

Robert: I'm sure you **(9)** _____ **(invited)**. It **(10)** _____ **(expect)** to be a great learning opportunity.

The passive voice: answer key

Grammar practice · B1 Intermediate

Where two or more answers are given, any of them is correct.

Exercise 1

1. c) are watered
2. a) will be shown
3. b) was given
4. c) had been sold
5. a) was painted
6. c) were left
7. a) will be solved
8. b) is being repaired
9. c) was told
10. c) is visited

Exercise 2

(1) Were you invited / Have you been invited
(2) was invited / have been invited
(3) was organised / is being organised / is organised
(4) were selected / had been selected / have been selected
(5) were chosen / have been chosen
(6) will it be held / is it being held
(7) will be held / is being held
(8) am included / will be included
(9) are invited / will be invited
(10) is expected

Corrections to the printed pages

Exercise 2: the conversation is between Samantha and Robert, and the verb for gap 9 is invite.