

Handout N.2

WHAT IS PASSIVE VOICE?

Passive Voice is when there is a chance of interchanging the role of any specific noun into the sentence. Moreover, the Active Voice tries preserving the simple argument-structured shape. The Passive Voice looks for COMPLEMENT or DIRECT OBJECT that can be possible to change by the position of the main noun, but the main subject tends to be found at the other way around.

La Voz Pasiva es cuando hay una oportunidad de intercambiar el rol de cualquier sustantivo específico dentro de la oración. No obstante, La Voz Pasiva trata de preservar la forma argumentativa estructurada simple. La Voz Pasiva busca el COMPLEMENTO u OBJETO DIRECTO que pueda ser posible de cambiar por la posición del sustantivo principal, pero, el sujeto principal tiende a encontrarse de la manera adversa.

1. In an Active sentence the subject is the agent (or doer) of the verb.

For instance:



Translation: los tres cochinitos salvaron al niño inteligente.

2. In passive sentences the subject is NOT the agent of the verb.
3. The passive is formed with be + past participle.

	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
PRESENT SIMPLE	IT MAKES	IT IS MADE
PRESENT CONTINUOUS	IT IS MAKING	IT IS BEING MADE
PRESENT PERFECT	IT HAS MADE	IT HAS BEEN MADE
PAST SIMPLE	IT MADE	IT WAS MADE
PAST CONTINUOUS	IT WAS MAKING	IT WAS BEING MADE
PAST PERFECT	IT HAD MADE	IT HAD BEEN MADE
FUTURE SIMPLE WITH WILL AND GOING TO	IT WILL MAKE IT IS GOING TO MAKE	IT WILL BE MADE IT IS GOING TO BE MADE
INFINITIVE FORMS	MAKE TO MAKE	BE MADE TO BE MADE
-ING FORM	MAKING	BEING MADE

REASON FOR USING THE PASSIVE VOICE

1- THE AGENT IS UNKNOWN, UNIMPORTANT OR OBVIOUS

My bike has been stolen! (=we don't know who did it).
The mouse are kept in cages (=it's not important who does this).
A man was arrested (=it's obvious the police did this).

2- THE MAIN TOPIC OF THE SENTENCE IS NOT THE AGENT.

In English, the main topic of the sentence normally comes at the beginning, and the new information about the topic comes at the end.

Eduardo Becerrit directed "the Pianist".
(In the profile of Becerrit, who is the main topic of the sentence.)
If the agent is not the main topic of the sentence, we use the passive.
"The Pianist was directed by Eduardo Becerrit.
(In an article about *The Pianist*, which is the main topic of the sentence.)

REMEMBER:

If we include the agent, we use by.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL TEXTS:

- In more formal texts, the passive is preferred because it is less personal. This is especially true in scientific, technical or academic writing.**
- The following passive constructions are particularly common in this kind of formal writing:**
 - It is said that...**
 - it is thought that...**
 - it is believed that...**
 - it has been proved that...**
- In informal speech, we can avoid using the passive by using a subject like WE, THEY, PEOPLE, SOMEONE, ETC. This sounds more personal and friendly.**

Compare the following pairs of sentences:

Eduardo is said to be interested in living abroad.
They say Eduardo is interested in living abroad.

The Gold Label Credit card can be used all over the world.
You can use the Gold Label Credit card all over the world.

More computers are being bought than ever before.
People are buying more computers than ever before.

PASSIVE FORMS WITH *HAVE* AND *GET*

- The passive form HAVE + OBJECT + PAST PARTICIPLE is used to talk about something we pay other people to do for us.**

She has her nose pierced when she was a teenager.

We use GET + OBJECT + PAST PARTICIPLE when it was difficult to have something done.

After many years of trying, he finally got his book published.

b. We use GET + PAST PARTICIPLE for things that happen by accident, or things which happen to us that are unpleasant.

*It's common for things to get broken when you move house.
My luggage got stolen somewhere at the airport.*