

Basic English Grammar



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The Passive in the Present

Week 6 – Lecture 6

The Passive

In most sentences, the subject carries out an action and the object receives it, or the result of it.

In passive sentences, this is reversed: the subject receives the action.

Why should we use the passive?

- You don't know who did the action or it is obvious who did the action.
- You don't want to say who or what did the action.
- The object is the most important part of the sentence.

How to turn an active sentence into a passive sentence?

1. Identify the subject, the verb, and the object.
2. Move the object to become the new subject of the sentence
3. Check the verb tense in the active sentence
4. Conjugate the verb “be”
5. Add the past participle (verb 3) of the main verb after “be”.
6. Subject of the active sentence.



**THE PRESENT
SIMPLE
PASSIVE**

The Present Simple Passive

The focus is on “many people.”

Many people study this book.

The subject of the active sentence is “many people.”

This book is studied by many people.

The focus is on “this book”, which is the subject of the passive sentence.

“Study” changes to “is studied”.

HOW TO FORM

All passives use a form of “be” with a past participle. The agent (the thing doing the action) can be introduced with “by”, but the sentence would still make sense without it.



Further examples

The speaker doesn't mention the agent because the verb obviously refers to the police.

Criminals are arrested every day in this town.

The agent is not mentioned because the process is more important.

Are the posters printed on quality paper?

"Be" and the subject swap places to form questions.

Further examples

1. Our apartment **is cleaned** every Friday.
2. These programs **are used** by many students.
3. The car **is** usually **driven** by my mother.
4. The game **is** usually **played** in Central Park each September.
5. The newspaper **is delivered** every morning at 7 AM.

Look at the pictures and complete the sentences using the phrases in the panel.

1. The course _____ online.
2. The alarm _____ once a month at my workplace.
3. The Eiffel Tower _____ by millions of tourists each year.
4. Lunch _____ in the college cafeteria.
5. The band _____ to perform its greatest hits.

is expected

is visited

is displayed

is tested

is eaten

is taught

Look at the pictures and complete the sentences using the phrases in the panel.

1. The course **is taught** online.
2. The alarm **is tested** once a month at my workplace.
3. The Eiffel Tower **is visited** by millions of tourists each year.
4. Lunch **is eaten** in the college cafeteria.
5. The band **is expected** to perform its greatest hits.

~~is expected~~

~~is visited~~

~~is displayed~~

~~is tested~~

~~is eaten~~

~~is taught~~



**THE PRESENT
CONTINUOUS
PASSIVE**

The present continuous passive

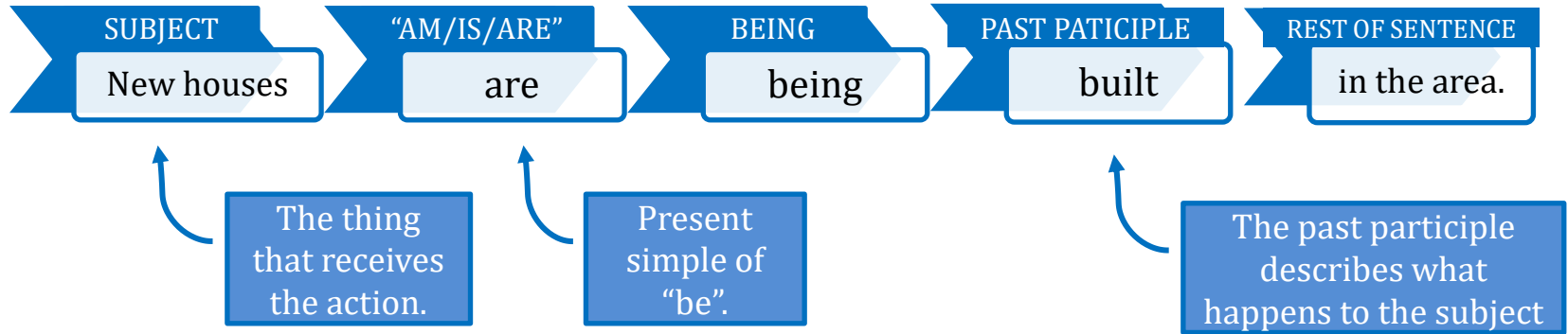
PRESENT CONTINUOUS

Developers **are building** lots of new houses in the area.

Lots of new houses **are being built** in the area.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS PASSIVE

HOW TO FORM



Further examples

1. You can't use the pool today because it **is being cleaned**.
2. The robbery **is being investigated** by the police.
3. We're living in a trailer while our house **is being rebuilt**.
4. The course **is being taught** by a well-known scientist.
5. I **am being interviewed** by a news channel tomorrow.
6. Don't worry, the food **is being cooked** as we speak.
7. Posters for the concert **are being put up** all over town.

Match the active sentences to the equivalent passive sentences

1. They are performing the play on stage.

A new apartment building is being built near my house.

2. A famous designer is making her new dress.

The play is being performed on stage.

3. They are building a new apartment building near my house.

The leak in my roof is being fixed.

4. A plumber is fixing the leak in my roof.

Grammar is being taught by Miss A at the moment.

5. Miss A is teaching Grammar at the moment.

Her new dress is being made by a famous designer.

Match the active sentences to the equivalent passive sentences

1. They are performing the play on stage.
 2. A famous designer is making her new dress.
 3. They are building a new apartment building near my house.
 4. A plumber is fixing the leak in my roof.
 5. Miss A is teaching Grammar at the moment.
1. A new apartment building is being built near my house.
 2. The play is being performed on stage.
 3. The leak in my roof is being fixed.
 4. Grammar is being taught by Miss A at the moment.
 5. Her new dress is being made by a famous designer.
-
- The diagram shows five yellow arrows connecting the active sentences on the left to their corresponding passive sentences on the right. The connections are: 1 to 2, 2 to 5, 3 to 1, 4 to 3, and 5 to 4.



**THE PRESENT
PERFECT
PASSIVE**

The present perfect passive

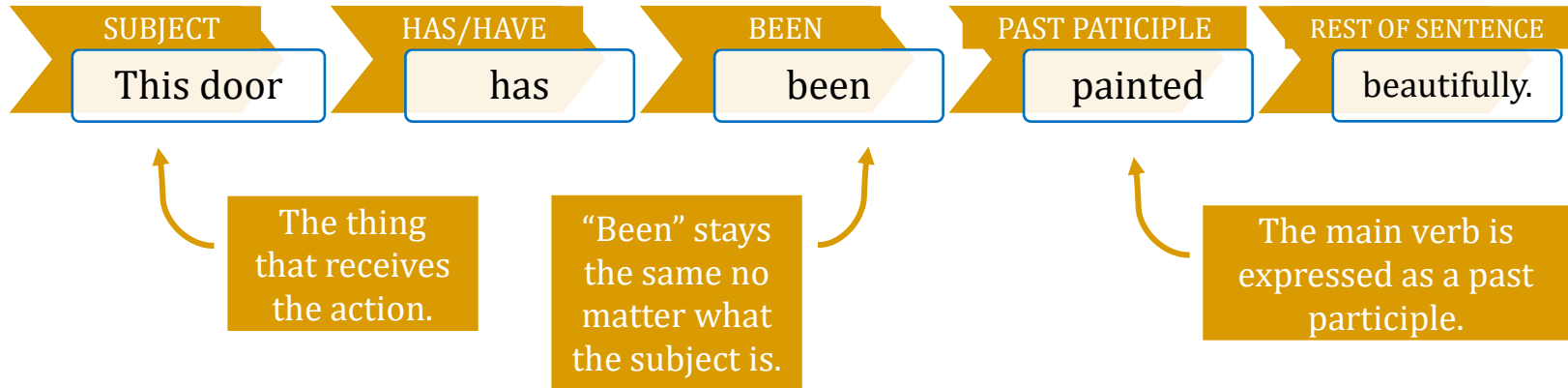
PRESENT PERFECT

Don't worry, I **have fed** the cats.

Don't worry, the cats **have been fed**.

PRESENT PERFECT PASSIVE

HOW TO FORM



Further examples

1. This door **has been painted** beautifully.
2. Do you know if all the lights **have been turned off**?
3. **Has** your computer **been fixed** yet? It broke months ago.
4. The new parts **haven't been delivered** yet, so you'll have to wait.
5. All of the smoke detectors **have been replaced**.

Rewrite the sentences using the present perfect passive!

1. The earthquake **has destroyed** a lot of buildings.
2. People **have** never **climbed** that mountain before.
3. It's cold. Someone **has left** the window open.
4. We **have sold** all the tickets for tonight's movie.
5. People **have booked** all the tables in the restaurant.
6. They **have given** the puppies to families with big yards.

Rewrite the sentences using the present perfect passive!

1. A lot of buildings **have been destroyed** by the earthquake.
2. That mountain **has** never **been climbed** before.
3. It's cold. The window **has been left** open.
4. All the tickets **have been sold** for tonight's movie.
5. All the tables **have been booked** in the restaurant.
6. The puppies **have been given** to families with big yards.

Thank you!

REFERENCES

Murphy, Raymond & Smalzer, William. *Grammar in use, Intermediate*. Cambridge U. Press, 2019.

DK. *English for Everyone – English Grammar Guide*. Dorling Kindersley Limited, 2016.