

# Basic English Grammar



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# **The Passive: Modal Verbs**

Week 9 – Lecture 9

# **The Passive with Modals**

Modal verbs in English can be used in passive forms. As with other passive constructions, the emphasis changes to the object that receives the action.



**MODALS IN  
THE PRESENT  
PASSIVE**

# Modals in the Present Passive

Modals in passive forms don't change. The sentence starts with the modal, then the verb "be" plus the past participle.

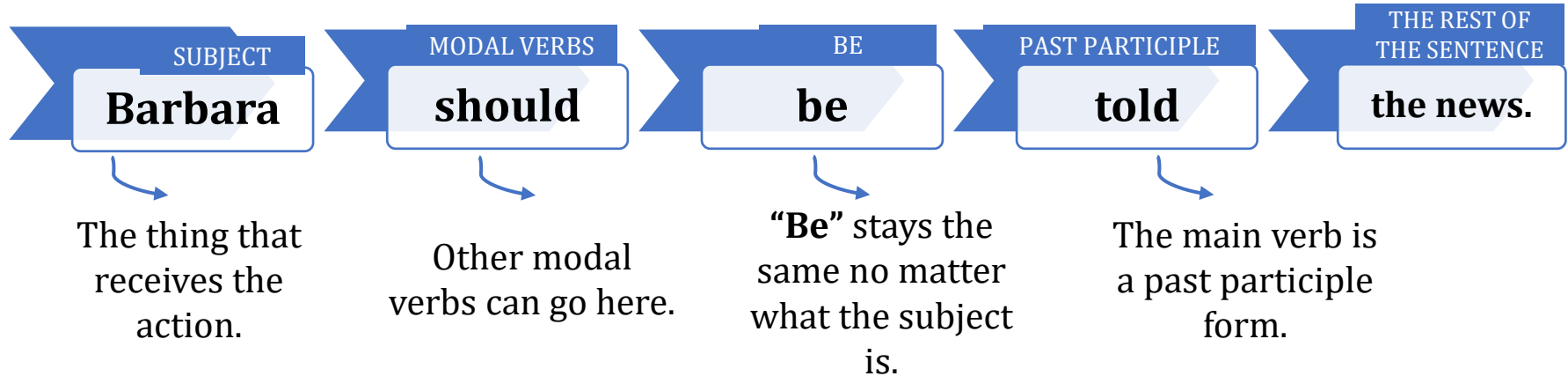
PRESENT WITH MODAL

**You should tell Barbara the exciting news!**

**Barbara should be told the exciting news.**

PRESENT PASSIVE WITH MODAL

# HOW TO FORM



# Further examples

1. **Should** the package **be delivered** to your house or your office?
2. The treasure chest **can** only **be opened** with a special key.
3. All new employees **must be shown** what to do if there's a fire.
4. It is a difficult task, but it **can be accomplished**.
5. The fridge **might be fixed** if the damage is minor.
6. She **must be informed** in the case of an emergency.
7. The cake **may not be made** by her on time.

## Rewrite the sentences, put the words in the correct order.

1. at – must – Protective – all – worn – glasses – be – times.
2. box – kept – should – place. – a – This – in – be – safe
3. meeting – until – be – week? – the – postponed – in – Can – later – the
4. turned – off – should – All – before – the – leaving – computers – office. – be

## Answers:

1. at – must – Protective – all – worn – glasses – be – times.

*Protective glasses **must be worn** at all times.*

2. box – kept – should – place. – a – This – in – be – safe

*This box **should be kept** in a safe place.*

3. meeting – until – be – week? – the – postponed – in – Can – later – the

***Can the meeting be postponed** until later in the week?*

4. turned – off – should – All – before – the – leaving – computers – office. – be

*All computers **should be turned off** before leaving the office.*

# Match the beginnings of the sentences to the correct endings.

- |                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Bicycles should only be ridden  | if we use better ingredients.     |
| 2. The dentist told me that        | a tiger has escaped from the zoo. |
| 3. Everyone should be warned that  | You must be disappointed.         |
| 4. The dish could be improved      | to finish her assignment.         |
| 5. The steak should be fried       | if you are wearing a helmet.      |
| 6. So, you failed your exam!       | one of my teeth must be removed.  |
| 7. Clara should be given more time | for one minute on each side.      |

# Answers:

1. Bicycles should only be ridden if we use better ingredients.
  2. The dentist told me that a tiger has escaped from the zoo.
  3. Everyone should be warned that You must be disappointed.
  4. The dish could be improved to finish her assignment.
  5. The steak should be fried if you are wearing a helmet.
  6. So, you failed your exam! one of my teeth must be removed.
  7. Clara should be given more time for one minute on each side.
- 
- ```
graph LR; 1[Bicycles should only be ridden] --> 2[a tiger has escaped from the zoo.]; 2[The dentist told me that] --> 7[Clara should be given more time]; 3[Everyone should be warned that] --> 6[So, you failed your exam!]; 4[The dish could be improved] --> 5[The steak should be fried]; 5[The steak should be fried] --> 4[The dish could be improved]; 6[So, you failed your exam!] --> 3[Everyone should be warned that]; 7[Clara should be given more time] --> 1[Bicycles should only be ridden];
```

# Answers:

1. Bicycles **should** only **be ridden** if we use better ingredients.
  2. The dentist told me that a tiger has escaped from the zoo.
  3. Everyone **should be warned** that You **must be disappointed**.
  4. The dish **could be improved** to finish her assignment.
  5. The steak **should be fried** if you are wearing a helmet.
  6. So, you failed your exam! one of my teeth **must be removed**.
  7. Clara **should be given** more time for one minute on each side.
- 
- ```
graph LR; L1[1. Bicycles should only be ridden] --> R5[5. The steak should be fried]; L2[2. The dentist told me that] --> R6[6. So, you failed your exam!]; L3[3. Everyone should be warned that] --> R7[7. Clara should be given more time]; L4[4. The dish could be improved] --> R2[2. The dentist told me that]; L5[5. The steak should be fried] --> R4[4. The dish could be improved]; L6[6. So, you failed your exam!] --> R1[1. Bicycles should only be ridden]; L7[7. Clara should be given more time] --> R3[3. Everyone should be warned that];
```



**MODALS IN  
THE PAST  
PASSIVE**

# Modals in the Past

The perfect passive is used to refer to events that happened before another event in the past.

Modals in perfect tenses can become passive by replacing “have” with “have been”.

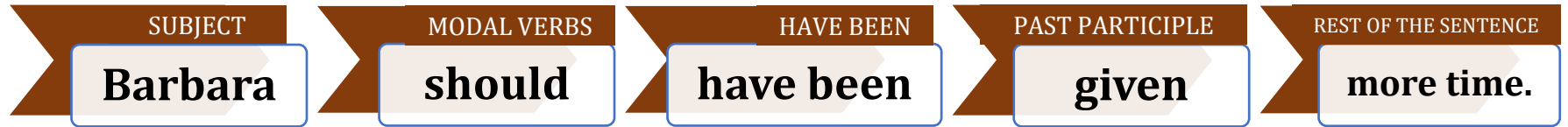
PERFECT WITH MODAL

The managers **should have given** Barbara the exciting news!

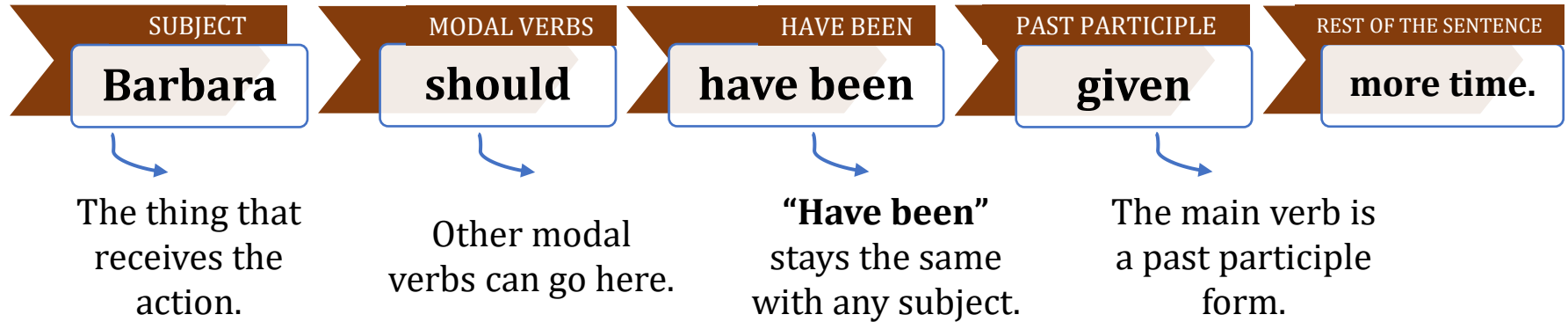
Daniel **should have been given** the exciting news.

PERFECT PASSIVE WITH MODAL

# HOW TO FORM



# HOW TO FORM



# Further examples

1. We **should have been told** that the concert was canceled!
2. The robber **would have been arrested** if he hadn't been so quick.
3. The leaking pipe **might have been fixed** now. Should we ask?
4. Lots of people think that the fire **could have been prevented**.
5. Tom is usually a good student, but he did poorly on the last test. The instructions **might have not been understood** by him.
6. The report **could have been finished** if I had stayed longer at the office.

## Mark the sentences that are correct.

1. They should have been told that the class was canceled.   
They should have told that the class was canceled.
2. All the floors must have been mopped at the end of the day.   
All the floors must be mopped at the end of the day.
3. The mountain can be climbed with the help of ropes.   
The mountain can been climbed with the help of ropes.
4. The building should have been demolish years ago.   
The building should have been demolished years ago.

# Mark the sentences that are correct.

## (Answers)

1. They should have been told that the class was canceled.   
They should have told that the class was canceled.
2. All the floors must have been mopped at the end of the day.   
All the floors must be mopped at the end of the day.
3. The mountain can be climbed with the help of ropes.   
The mountain can been climbed with the help of ropes.
4. The building should have been demolish years ago.   
The building should have been demolished years ago.

# Mark the sentences that are correct.

## (Answers)

1. They **should have been told** that the class was canceled.
- They should have told that the class was canceled.

2. All the floors must have been mopped at the end of the day.
- All the floors **must be mopped** at the end of the day.

3. The mountain **can be climbed** with the help of ropes.
- The mountain can been climbed with the help of ropes.

4. The building should have been demolish years ago.
- The building **should have been demolished** years ago.

## **Rewrite the sentences using modals in the perfect passive. Adjust the adverb of time!**

1. Our forests must be protected from destruction.
2. This box should be kept in a safe place.
3. All the floors must be swept at the end of the day.
4. The mountain can be climbed with the help of ropes.
5. It is a difficult task, but it could be accomplished.

## Answers:

1. Our forests must be protected from destruction.  
*Our forests **must have been protected** from destruction.*
2. This box should be kept in a safe place.  
*This box **should have been kept** in a safe place.*
3. All the floors must be swept at the end of the day.  
*All the floors **must have been swept** this morning.*
4. The mountain can be climbed with the help of ropes.  
*The mountain **could have been climbed** with the help of ropes.*
5. It is a difficult task, but it could be accomplished.  
*It was a difficult task, but it **could have been accomplished**.*

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.