

# PASSIVE VOICE



~~I'm lovin' it.~~

**It is being loved by me.**

# Patterns: Active vs. Passive Voice

## ACTIVE VOICE:

Alex wrote the essay on Alzheimer's.

↑                      ↑                      ↑  
doer of action      action              receiver of action

## PASSIVE VOICE:

The essay on Alzheimer's was written by Alex.

↑                      ↑                      ↑  
receiver of action      action              doer of action

## Changing from Active into Passive

To change a sentence from active into the passive:

- a) the object of the active sentence becomes the subject in the passive sentence,
- b) the active verb remains in the same tense, but changes into a passive form,
- c) the subject of the active sentence becomes the agent, and is either introduced with the preposition *by* or omitted.

	subject	verb	object
active	<i>The mayor</i>	<i>opened</i>	<i>the new school.</i>

	subject	verb	agent
passive	<i>The new school</i>	<i>was opened</i>	<i>by the mayor.</i>

# FORMATION RULES

## A form of TO BE + PAST PARTICIPLE

- PRESENT: am, is are...
  - PAST: was, were...
  - FUTURE: will be...
  - PRESENT PERFECT: have been...
  - PRESENT CONTINUOUS: is/are being...
  - PAST CONTINUOUS: was/were being...
- - ED/D (regular verbs)
  - 3rd form or irregular verbs (taken, seen, brought etc.)

Active Voice	Passive Voice
The peon opened the gate.	The gate was opened by the peon
Some boys were helping the old man	The old man was being helped by some boys.
He will finish the work in a fortnight	The work will be finished by him in a fortnight.
Why did your brother write such a letter?	Why was such a letter written by your brother
He handed her a chair.	A chair was handed to her by him.



	Active Voice	Passive Voice
Present Simple	They <b>serve</b> dinner at 6:00.	Dinner <b>is served</b> at 6:00.
Present Continuous	They <b>are serving</b> dinner now.	Dinner <b>is being served</b> now.
Past Simple	They <b>served</b> dinner.	Dinner <b>was served</b> .
Past Continuous	They <b>were serving</b> dinner.	Dinner <b>was being served</b> .
Future Simple	They <b>will serve</b> dinner.	Dinner <b>will be served</b> .
Present Perfect	They <b>have served</b> dinner.	Dinner <b>has been served</b> .
Past Perfect	They <b>had served</b> dinner.	Dinner <b>had been served</b> .
Future Perfect	They <b>will have served</b> dinner.	Dinner <b>will have been served</b> .
Present infinitive	They <b>should serve</b> dinner.	Dinner <b>should be served</b> .
Perfect infinitive	They <b>should have served</b> dinner.	Dinner <b>should have been served</b> .
-ing form	He likes people <b>serving</b> his dinner.	He likes his dinner <b>being served</b> .
Perfect -ing form	<b>Having served</b> dinner, ...	Dinner <b>having been served</b> , ...
Modals + be + p.p.	You <b>must serve</b> dinner.	Dinner <b>must be served</b> .

## We use the Passive:

- when **the agent** (the person who does the action) is **unknown, unimportant** or **obvious** from the context. *The door **had been locked**. (we don't know who locked it – unknown agent) Repairs **are being made** to the car. (by the mechanic – obvious agent)*
- when we are interested more in the action than the person who carries it out, such as in **news reports, formal notices, instructions, processes, headlines, advertisements, etc.** *The whole area **was evacuated**. (news report) Breakfast **is served** from 6.00 to 10.30. (formal notice)*
- to make **statements** more **formal** or **polite**. *"My new dress **has been ruined**". (more polite than saying "You ruined my dress").*
- to put **emphasis** on the agent. *The Pyramids were built **by the ancient Egyptians**.*

- We use **by + agent** to say who or what carries out the action. We use **with + instrument / material / ingredient** to say what the agent used to carry out the action. *The cake was made **by Ann**. It was made **with eggs, flour and butter**.*

- Only transitive verbs (verbs followed by an object) can be changed into the passive:

**active:** *Mary **feeds** the dogs.* (transitive verb)

**passive:** *The dogs **are fed** by Mary.*

**but:** *They **sleep** early every night.* (The verb sleep in this sentence is intransitive; not followed by an object. The sentence cannot be changed into the passive.)

**Some transitive verbs, such as *have, fit, suit, resemble, etc.* cannot be changed into the passive.** *She **resembles** her father in many ways.*