

Title - The Passive Voice

Level – Intermediate

- We use the passive voice when we want to place more emphasis on the object/objects or receiver/receivers of an action. The person speaking could think that it is necessary to place more emphasis on the object/objects or receiver/receivers of an action.
- We also use the passive voice when we do not know who is performing the action, or it is not apparent who is performing the action. An animal or an inanimate object could be performing the action as well.
- The passive voice consists of a form of the verb **'be'** and a ***past participle***.
- Following are examples of the passive voice. With each example of the passive voice, there is an example of the active voice for the purpose of contrast and comparison. The active voice sentences are numbered. The passive voice sentences are lettered.

Active and Passive - Simple Present, Simple Past, and Simple Future

1. Some people drink coffee every morning.

1. simple present active voice

A. The mail is delivered in the morning.

A. is/are + past participle = simple present passive voice

2. It was very cold yesterday.

2. simple past active voice

B. A heavy snowstorm was forecast on the news last night.

B. was/were + past participle = simple past passive voice

3. He said that he would send the package on Wednesday and that it should arrive on Friday. They'll deliver the package on Friday.

3. simple future active voice – "will"

C. The package will be delivered on Friday.

C. will be + past participle = simple future passive voice

Active and Passive - Present Progressive/Continuous, Past Progressive/Continuous, Future Progressive/Continuous

note: The future continuous/progressive is not often used with the passive voice

1. What are you doing now? I'm eating lunch. What about you?

1. present progressive/continuous active voice

A. The packages are being picked up on Tuesday and should arrive by Friday.

A. is/are being + past participle = present progressive/continuous passive voice

2. He was drinking coffee and listening to the news on the radio this morning.

2. past progressive continuous active voice

B. His car was being repaired, so he asked his friend for a ride to work.

B. was/were + past participle = past progressive/continuous passive voice

3. We will be talking about that next week. I really look forward to it.

3. future progressive/continuous active voice

Active and Passive - Present Perfect, Past Perfect, Future Perfect

1. I still haven't read that book.

1. present perfect active voice

A. "I'll get to that soon." Those words have been spoken many times before.

A. has/have been + past participle = present perfect passive voice

2. He had not known if the mailman delivered the package he was expecting until he went downstairs to check. He was glad to see that it was there. He took it upstairs and opened it.

2. past perfect active voice

B. The package still had not been delivered by the end of the day. He was told it should arrive today. He was wondering where it was.

B. had been + past participle = past perfect passive voice

3. I hope the rain will have stopped by the time we leave, as none of us brought umbrellas. It's raining very hard.

3. future perfect active voice

C. I think the package will have been delivered by Wednesday.

C. will have been + past participle = future perfect passive voice

Active - Present Perfect Progressive/Continuous, Past Perfect Progressive/Continuous, Future Perfect Progressive/Continuous

Note: The progressive/continuous forms of the perfect aspects/tenses are hardly ever used in the passive voice.

1. We have been waiting for the bus for about fifteen minutes.

1. present perfect progressive/continuous

2. I'm glad you mentioned that because I had been thinking about bringing it up for quite some time.

2. past perfect progressive/continuous

3. I will have been studying English for 6 months at the end of June. We will have been living in this city for almost a year at the end of May.

3. future perfect progressive/continuous

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