

Passive

The sentences that you studied in Parts I through III were in the active voice. Most of them had subjects that performed actions. In contrast, sentences in the passive voice have subjects that receive some action.

ACTIVE: **George Lucas** produced the film.

PASSIVE: **The film** was produced by George Lucas.

In passive sentences, the doer of the action is sometimes in a prepositional phrase starting with the preposition *by*, as in "by George Lucas." In other instances, there is no *by* phrase because the doer of the action is not important or is not known.

Microcomputers were used in the study.

In passive sentences, the main verb is in the perfect/passive form. You have already studied this form in Parts I, II, and III. To refresh your memory, see pages 29–30, 69, and 101. The auxiliary *be* precedes the perfect/passive form of the main verb.

Oranges are grown in Florida.

In the present tense, regular verbs follow this pattern:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I am verb + ed	we are verb + ed
Second Person	you are verb + ed	you are verb + ed
Third Person	he, she, it is verb + ed	they are verb + ed

Contracted forms: *I'm, you're, he's, she's, it's, we're, they're*

The pattern for regular verbs in the past tense is as follows:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I was verb + ed	we were verb + ed
Second Person	you were verb + ed	you were verb + ed
Third Person	he, she, it was verb + ed	they were verb + ed

No contracted forms

Both the modal verb *will* and the auxiliary verb *be* are used to signal the future:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I will be verb + ed	we will be verb + ed
Second Person	you will be verb + ed	you will be verb + ed
Third Person	he, she, it will be verb + ed	they will be verb + ed

Contracted forms: *I'll, you'll, he'll, she'll, it'll, we'll, you'll, they'll*

For the perfect/passive forms of irregular verbs, consult the appendix.

exercise
17-1

Complete each passive sentence with the form of the verb indicated in parentheses. Then rewrite the sentence using a pronoun and, if possible, a contraction.

EXAMPLE: The experiment *will be performed* (perform, future) tomorrow.
It'll be performed tomorrow.

- James _____ (reward, future) for his work.

- The students _____ (affect, past) by the changes in the tax law.

- Newspapers _____ (deliver, present) daily.

- Potatoes _____ (grow, present) in Idaho.

- The winners _____ (announce, past) yesterday.

- Your schedules _____ (change, future) next week.

- The soccer match _____ (reschedule, future).

- All the students in class _____ (invite, present) to the party.

- Carmen _____ (blame, past) for the error.

- The house _____ (destroy, past).

Progressive Verbs in the Passive Voice

Progressive verbs in the passive voice have an additional auxiliary verb *be*, which has the progressive *-ing* ending: *being*.

Present progressive verbs in the passive voice follow this pattern:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I am being verb + ed	we are being verb + ed
Second Person	you are being verb + ed	you are being verb + ed
Third Person	he, she, it is being verb + ed	they are being verb + ed

Contracted forms: *I'm, you're, he's, she's, it's, we're, they're*

Past progressive verbs are similar, but the tense of the first auxiliary *be* changes:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I was being verb + ed	we were being verb + ed
Second Person	you were being verb + ed	you were being verb + ed
Third Person	he, she, it was being verb + ed	they were being verb + ed

No contracted forms

The future progressive is rarely used, so it will not be presented here.

exercise

17-2

Complete each passive sentence with the form of the verb indicated in parentheses. Then rewrite the sentence using a pronoun and, if possible, a contraction.

EXAMPLE: A new rocket *is being designed* (design, present progressive).

It's being designed.

- This event _____ (broadcast, present progressive) around the world.

- New uses for recycled materials _____ (develop, present progressive).

- The luggage _____ (carry, past progressive) to the plane when one of the suitcases popped open.

- The issues _____ (discuss, past progressive) when we arrived.

- Your job application _____ (consider, present progressive).

6. Our passports _____ (check, past progressive) when the alarm rang.

7. New council members _____ (elect, present progressive) this year.

8. That store _____ (close, present progressive) because of safety problems.

9. The protestors _____ (ignore, past progressive) by the politicians.

10. Donations _____ (collect, present progressive) for the poor.

Perfect Verbs in the Passive Voice

Perfect verbs in the passive voice have two auxiliary verbs—*have*, which carries tense, and *be*, which is in the perfect/passive form *been*.

Present perfect verbs in the passive voice follow this pattern:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I have been verb + ed	we have been verb + ed
Second Person	you have been verb + ed	you have been verb + ed
Third Person	he, she, it has been verb + ed	they have been verb + ed

Contracted forms: *I've, you've, he's, she's, it's, we've, they've*

Past perfect verbs are similar, but the form of the first auxiliary changes to *had* to indicate the past tense:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I had been verb + ed	we had been verb + ed
Second Person	you had been verb + ed	you had been verb + ed
Third Person	he, she, it had been verb + ed	they had been verb + ed

Contracted forms: *I'd, you'd, he'd, she'd, it'd, we'd, they'd*

Future perfect verbs include the modal verb *will*, as well as the auxiliaries *have* and *be*:

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I will have been verb + ed	we will have been verb + ed
Second Person	you will have been verb + ed	you will have been verb + ed
Third Person	he, she, it will have been verb + ed	they will have been verb + ed

Perfect progressive verbs in the passive voice are extremely rare; they will not be presented here.

exercise	17-3
----------	------

Complete each passive sentence with the form of the verb indicated in parentheses. Then rewrite the sentence using a pronoun and, if possible, a contraction.

EXAMPLE: The lost information *has been retrieved*. (retrieve, present perfect).
It's been retrieved.

1. My brother _____ (promote, present perfect).

2. The jobs _____ (assign, future perfect) by the time we arrive.

3. My parents _____ (delay, past perfect) at the airport, so they were late.

4. The work _____ (finish, future perfect) when the director meets with us.

5. Her first book _____ (praised, past perfect) highly.

6. Amy and I _____ (notify, future perfect) of any problems before we leave.

7. The arrangements _____ (make, present perfect).

8. The job _____ (offer, present perfect) to Laila.

9. The report _____ (revise, present perfect).

10. The roads _____ (improve, past perfect) since my previous visit.

Forming Negatives

To form a negative sentence, place the word *not* after the first auxiliary verb.

Examples: is not spoken, is not being written, has not been read, will not have been noticed

exercise

17-4

Make each of the following sentences negative.

EXAMPLE: The cause of the fire was discovered.
The cause of the fire was not discovered.

1. The game was canceled.

2. Rita has been fired.

3. By this time next year, the project will have been completed.

4. Some of the important issues are being discussed.

5. Our bags are being searched.

6. Your x-rays will be returned to you.

7. The recent findings are being presented to the public.

8. The cell phone had been taken from the car.

9. This computer has been used before.

10. The document is being prepared by the secretary.

Forming Questions

Passive questions are formed in two ways. For *yes/no* questions and for *wh*-questions in which the question word is not the subject, the first (or only) auxiliary verb begins the question and is followed by the subject.

Has the letter been sent?
 When will the letter be sent?

When the question word is the subject, it begins the question and is followed by the auxiliary and main verbs.

What was sent?

exercise

17-5

Rewrite the following statements as yes/no questions.

EXAMPLE: The report was revised.

Was the report revised?

1. All questions were answered.

2. Everyone has been notified of the cancellation.

3. The basketball game will be broadcast.

4. The road is being repaired.

5. Enough evidence had been collected.

6. He was impressed by the report.

7. The costs for the project have been calculated.

8. Jobs are being cut.

9. Solutions to the problem are being explored.

10. The clock will be fixed tomorrow.

exercise

17-6

Complete the following questions based on the statements provided.

EXAMPLE: His car was stolen.
What *was stolen*?

1. Catherine Haley has been elected.
Who _____
2. The cave was explored.
What _____
3. Shoshona was given a scholarship.
Who _____
4. Pineapple is grown in Hawaii.
What _____
5. My old teacher is being honored at the special dinner tonight.
Who _____
6. The invitations are being sent on Friday.
When _____
7. The books were moved to the new library last year.
When _____
8. The new lights are being installed in all the classrooms.
Where _____
9. Thirty-two credits are required for graduation.
How many credits _____
10. The furniture was damaged in the fire.
What _____