

Lecture Notes:**- Grammatical Voice:**

- In grammar, the **voice** of a verb describes the relationship between the action or state that the verb expresses and the participants identified by its arguments (subject, object, etc).

I.e. Voice is the term used to describe whether a verb is active or passive.

- When the subject is the agent or doer of the action, the verb is in the **active voice**.
- We use the passive verb when:

- The speaker/writer wants to avoid identifying the agent (doer) which is the subject of the sentence in most cases.
- The subject is the patient, target or undergoer of the action.
- We are talking about a general truth.
- The agent (doer) is unknown.
- The agent (doer) is irrelevant.
- We want to emphasize the person or thing acted on.

- E.g.

The cat ate the mouse. → Active

The mouse was eaten by the cat. → Passive

- E.g.

I accidentally spilled the milk. → Active

The milk was spilled. → Passive

- Passivation:

- To change a sentence from the active voice to the passive voice, we need to do these 3 steps:

1. Move the object to the subject position.
2. Move the subject to an optional prepositional phrase that starts with "by".
I.e. "by + subject NP".
3. Add "a form of be" + Past Participle of the main verb

Note: The "form of be" must carry the same tense as the main verb of the active sentence.

- E.g.

The mouse ate the cheese. → Active Voice

The cheese was eaten by the mouse. → Passive Voice

- E.g.

She cooks the turkey. → Active Voice

The turkey is cooked by her. → Passive Voice

They will report the incident. → Active Voice

The incident will be reported by them. → Passive Voice

Many students have completed the assignment. → Active Voice

The assignment has been completed by many students. → Passive Voice

- **Note:** Intransitive verbs (verbs that do not take an object) cannot be passive.

Furthermore, some verbs cannot be used in the passive even if they are transitive.

Examples of such verbs are: belong, have (own), lack, resemble, suit.

- E.g. These sentences cannot undergo passivation.

We arrived home late at night.

Did you sleep well?

He was running too fast.

Joanne has two brothers.

Does this bag belong to you?

Unfortunately, Friday doesn't suit me.

- **Passive Clauses:**

- Passives can either be

1. **Short passives/Truncated passives**

- There's no prepositional phrase of the form ("by" + subject).
I.e. "By" + subject is not stated in the clause.
- E.g.
My car was hit in the car park. (It doesn't say who hit the car.)
A decision was made. (It doesn't say who made the decision.)

2. **Long passives**

- There is a prepositional phrase of the form ("by" + subject).
- **Be-passives** are passives that use "Be" + Past Participle of the main verb.
- E.g. The cheese was eaten by the mouse.
- **Get-passives** are passives that use the lexical verb "get" and are used in an informal manner.
Note: There's a restriction with get-passives. The subject must be actively involved in causing the event/state or be affected positively/negatively.
- E.g.
My car got smashed.
The trees got damaged in the wind.
- **Bare passives** are passives such that the past participles occur without "be" or "get".
- E.g.
I had my car cleaned by a professional.
- **Adjectival-passives** are verb phrases that contain the verb "be" + an adjective formed from a past participle.
Sometimes, past participles have the same form as adjectives, leading to ambiguities.
- E.g.
Her leg is broken.

Here, the word "broken" can be an adjective describing the state of her leg. In this case, we call "broken" an adjectival passive.

Alternatively, "broken" can be the past participle of "break", making the whole clause a passive clause. This alternative describes an event.

Textbook Notes:

- **Active vs Passive Clauses:**
- Consider the sentences:
Bill shot the caribou.
The caribou was shot by Bill.

The first sentence is an active clause while the second sentence is a passive clause.

Active clauses are the default. In active clauses, the actor or experiencer in the event is usually assigned to the subject position while the entity undergoing the event described by the verb is assigned to the object position.

In **passive clauses**, this is reversed. The entity undergoing the event is assigned to the subject position. The actor in the event can optionally be introduced by the preposition 'by'.

To create a passive clause from an active clause, you need to do the following things:

1. Move the object to the subject position.
 2. Move the subject to an optional prepositional phrase that starts with “by”.
I.e. “by + subject NP”.
 3. Add “a form of be” + Past Participle of the main verb
- **Long Passive vs Short Passive:**
 - In a **short passive**, the optional prepositional phrase that starts with “by” is omitted, while in a **long passive**, it is kept.
 - E.g.
The manuscript was completed by the author. → Long
The manuscript was completed. → Short
 - **Function of Passive Clauses:**
 - The passive voice is mainly used to emphasize the person or entity that has been affected by the action (object of the active sentence) rather than the person or the entity that performs that action (subject of the active sentence). For this reason, the object of the active sentence is fronted in a passive sentence to show it is the more important information.
 - Remember that you can only passivize a transitive clause. Intransitive clauses cannot be passivized since there is no object present in the sentence.
 - **When To Use The Passive Voice:**
 - You may use the passive voice in any of the following cases:
 1. **The actor is unknown.**
E.g. The famous painting was stolen. (We don't know by who.)
 2. **The actor is irrelevant.**
E.g. A new solar power plant will be built. (We are not interested in who is building it.)
 3. **You want to be vague about who is responsible.**
E.g. Some mistakes were made during the process.
 4. **You want to emphasize the person or thing acted on.**
E.g. Insulin was first discovered by researchers at the University of Toronto.
 5. **You are writing in an academic/scientific genre that traditionally relies on passive voice.** The passive voice is often preferred in formal writing and research papers.

- **Different Forms of Passives with Different Tenses:**

Tense	Example
Simple Present	The house is cleaned weekly.
Present continuous	The house is being cleaned now.
Simple past	The house was cleaned this morning.
Past Continuous	The house was being cleaned yesterday.
Present Perfect	The house has been cleaned since this morning.

Past Perfect	The house had been cleaned before you got in.
Future	The house will be cleaned tomorrow.
Future continuous	The house will be being cleaned next week.
Present conditional	The house would be cleaned if they had visitors.
Past conditional	The house would have been cleaned if it had been dirty.
Modals	The house should be cleaned before they leave.

- **Get Passives:**
- **Get passives** are an informal type of passive that uses the lexical verb get.
- We form this type of passive by the use of the verb 'get' followed by the past participle form of the main verb.
- This type of passive has an additional restriction: the subject must be actively involved in causing the event/state or be affected negatively or positively.
- E.g.
The caribou got shot by a hunter.
My bike got smashed by a car.
- **Bare Passives:**
- Sometimes past participles occur with passive meanings without the verbs 'be' or 'get'. These are called **bare passives**.
- E.g. I had my car cleaned by a professional.
- **Adjectival Passives:**
- Sometimes past participles have the same forms as adjectives, leading to ambiguities. E.g.
Her leg was broken.

Here 'broken' can be an adjective describing the state of her leg.

In this case, we call just 'broken' an **adjectival passive**.

Alternatively, 'broken' can be the past participle of the verb 'break', making the whole clause a passive clause. This alternative describes an event and not as a state.