Lesson 4: Passive Voice

1. In the active voice, the subject of the sentence performs the action.
   e.g. A thief stole her money.

   In the passive voice, the subject of the sentence is acted upon by someone or something.
   e.g. Her money was stolen by a thief.

2. The passive voice is used when:
   i. we do not know who or what the ‘doer’ is.
      e.g. My brother’s bicycle was stolen last week. (We do not know who stole it.)
   ii. the ‘doer’ is not important.
      e.g. Paper is made from wood. (It is important to know what material paper is made from but not who makes it.
   iii. the ‘doer’ is obvious.
      e.g. Our company is organizing a picnic next week. All staffs are invited. (It is obvious that the ‘doer’ is ‘our company’.)

3. We form the passive voice in the simple present tense with the verb ‘am / are / is’ + the past participle of the main verb. We form positive and negative statements like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb to be</th>
<th>Past participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>am / 'm</td>
<td>welcomed to the ceremony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>am not / 'm not</td>
<td>eaten by the dog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You / We / They</td>
<td>are / 're</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>are not / aren’t</td>
<td>stolen by the thief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He / She / It</td>
<td>is / 's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>is not / isn’t</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 We form the passive voice in the simple past tense with the verb ‘was / were’ + the past participle of the main verb. We form positive and negative statements like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb to be</th>
<th>Past participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>was</td>
<td>welcomed to the ceremony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was not / wasn’t</td>
<td>eaten by the dog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You / We / They</td>
<td>were</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>were not / weren’t</td>
<td>stolen by the thief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He / She / It</td>
<td>was</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was not / wasn’t</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. The windows are dirty. They ____________ (clean) by my classmates next Monday.

14. This computer course ____________ (complete) next month.

15. The party ____________ (hold) by Mary next Tuesday.

16. A mouse ____________ (kill) by my uncle last Sunday.

17. The chairs ____________ (paint) in white tomorrow.

18. Mary ____________ (give) an ice-cream by her father everyday.

19. The road works ____________ (complete) next Thursday.

20. It ____________ (believe) that the earth is round.

21. You ____________ (ask) several questions by them at the meeting tomorrow.

22. That bridge ____________ (build) in the 1950's.

23. A lot of rice ____________ (export) from China every year.

24. My grandfather ____________ (treat) by a team of doctors last year.

25. We ____________ (ask) to attend the seminar by the teacher last lesson.

26. The document ____________ (sign) by the manager later.

27. That little boy ____________ (look) after by his grandmother tomorrow morning.

28. These flowers ____________ (grow) by Mr. Wong.

29. The safe ____________ (open) by the thief last night.

30. All fruits ____________ (eat) by the boys this morning.

Exercise 2

Rewrite the sentences in passive voice.

e.g. Peter writes a letter.

A letter is written by Peter.

1. They built a house.

   A house was built by them.

2. Our uncle takes Susan to hospital.

   Susan is taken to hospital by our uncle.

3. My sister brought a cat to school.

   A cat was brought to school by my sister.
Exercise 4
Rewrite the following sentences with passive voice in the space provided.

The malfunction cases are reported.
Somebody reports the malfunction cases.

The complaints are followed up.
Somebody follows up complaints.

The enquiries are answered patiently.
Somebody answers the enquiries patiently.

The public areas are cleaned regularly.
Somebody cleans the public areas regularly.

The lighting is checked before the shops open.
Somebody checks the lighting before the shops open.

The windows are washed every morning.
Somebody washes the windows every morning.

The goods are wrapped outside the shops.
Somebody wraps the goods outside the shops.

The lobby is decorated every month.
Somebody decorates the lobby every month.

Some shows are performed in front of the fountain every weekend.
Somebody performs some shows in front of the fountain every weekend.

The manager will be told if there is any problem.
Somebody will tell the manager if there is any problem.