Lesson 5: 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. 3.1 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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>am not / 'm not</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You / We / They</td>
<td>are / 're</td>
<td>eaten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>are not / aren’t</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He / She / It</td>
<td>is / 's</td>
<td>stolen</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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was not / wasn’t</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You / We / They</td>
<td>were</td>
<td>eaten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>were not / weren’t</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He / She / It</td>
<td>was</td>
<td>stolen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was not / wasn’t</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We form the passive voice in the **simple future tense** with ‘**will be**’ + 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>will / ’ll be</td>
<td><strong>welcomed</strong> to the ceremony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You / We / They</td>
<td>will not / won’t be</td>
<td><strong>eaten</strong> by the dog.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He / She / It</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>stolen</strong> by the thief.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can also form the passive voice using ‘**be going to**’. We form positive and negative statements like this:

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

**Exercise 1**

*Fill in the blanks with the passive form of verbs given in brackets.*

e.g. A bag *is carried* (carry) by him to school everyday.
     Peter *was knocked* (knock) down by a lorry yesterday.

1. English ____________________ (speak) almost all over the world nowadays.
2. These watches ____________________ (make) in Japan.
3. All my stamps ____________________ (keep) in stamp albums.
4. Two men ____________________ (hurt) in the car accident that occurred last week.
5. My umbrella ____________________ (steal) when I went to the library yesterday.
6. A baby ____________________ (leave) in front of my door this morning.
7. Tom ____________________ (punish) by his class teacher last Saturday.
8. My sunglasses ____________________ (break) by Tina two days ago.
9. The carpet ____________________ (clean) every month.
10. This brush ____________________ (not use) for cleaning the floor.
11. Mary’s book ____________________ (lose) last week.
12. Peter’s radio ____________________ (repair) yesterday.
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 is 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 is brought to school by my sister.
4. They speak English.

5. The policemen help the children.

6. A robber broke the window of the shop.

7. Peter will look after my little brother.

8. My mother will buy some ice-cream.


10. Paul read a storybook last night.

Exercise 3

There are some special events happened to Jenny and Tommy's family last year. Write sentences in passive form (simple past tense) using the words given. The first one has been done for you.

1. Jenny and Tommy / marry / January

   Jenny and Tommy were married in January.

2. Tommy / promote / February

3. house / buy / March

4. Tommy and Jenny's Bakery / start / April

5. shop / rob / June

6. shop / redecorate / July
7. J&T Company / set up / August

8. house / sell / September

9. car / steal / October

10. baby / born / November

11. maid / hire / December

Exercise 4
Rewrite the following sentences with passive voice in the space provided.

Somebody reports the malfunction cases.

Somebody follows up complaints.

Somebody answers the enquiries patiently.

Somebody cleans the public areas regularly.

Somebody checks the lighting before the shops open.

Somebody washes the windows every morning.

Somebody wraps the goods outside the shops.

Somebody decorates the lobby every month.

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

Somebody will tell the manager if there is any problem.

1. 

2. 

3. 