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English Division:

Grammar: group 4

The passive voice

My grandfather was a builder. He built this house in 1965. In this sentence, we use the active voice to say what the subject does (what the grandfather did).

It’s big company. It employs two hundred people.

This house is quite old. It was built in 1965. We use the passive here to say what happens to the subject (the house here).

Two hundred people are employed by the company.

When we use the passive, who or what causes the action is often unknown or unimportant.

A lot of money was stolen in the robbery (somebody stole it but we don’t know who).

If we want to say who does or what causes the action, we use “by”……………………

This house was built by my grandfather.

Two hundred people are employed by the company.

We can only use the passive with verbs that need objects (transitive verbs).Verbs without objects (intransitive verbs) cannot form passive sentences (have no objects that can become subjects of the passive sentences.

Simple Present: am/is/ are plus past participle (regular or irregular past participle).

Ex: Somebody cleans this room every day (active sentence)

This room is cleaned every day (passive sentence)

Simple past: was or were plus past participle.

Ex: Somebody cleaned this room yesterday. (Active sentence)

This room was cleaned yesterday. (Passive sentence)

Present perfect: has/ have/ been plus past participle

Ex: Someone has stolen my wallet (active sentence).

My wallet has been stolen (passive sentence)

They have cancelled the African games (active sentence)

The African games have been cancelled.

Past perfect: had/ been plus past participle

Ex: The room looked nice. Someone had cleaned it (active sentence)

The room looked nice. It had been cleaned (passive sentence)

Present continuous: am/ is/are/ being plus past participle

Somebody is cleaning the room (active sentence)

The room is being cleaned (passive sentence)

Past continuous: was/ were/ being plus past participle

Somebody was cleaning the room when I arrived (active sentence)

The room was being cleaned when I arrived (passive sentence).

Future: will/ be/ past participle

Ex: someone will clean the room; (active sentence)

The room will be cleaned (passive sentence.

Modals: must/ should/ can/ could/ / be plus past participle.

Ex; a mystery is something that can’t be explained.

The music was very loud and could be heard from a long way away.

This situation is serious. Something must be done before it’s too late.

Do you think that less money should be spent on armaments?

Perfect infinitive:

Ex: Somebody should have cleaned the room. (Active sentence)

The room should have been cleaned. (Passive sentence)

I haven’t received the letter yet. It might have been stolen.

If you hadn’t left the car unlocked, it wouldn’t have been stolen.

There were some problems at first but they seem to have been solved.

Some verbs can have two objects. For example, give:

Ex: We gave the police the information. We have two objects here: the police and the information, so it is possible to make two passive sentences. The police were given the information. The information was given to the police use. Other verbs which can have two objects are: ask, offer, pay, show, teach, and tell. When we use these verbs in the passive, most often we begin with the person.

They offered me the job. I was offered the job but I refused it.

We will give you plenty of time. You will be given plenty of time to decide.

Has anyone shown you the new machine? Have you been shown the new machine?

Someone paid the men 200 dollars. The men were paid 200 dollars to do the job.

Exercise 1: Put the verbs into the correct form, present simple or past simple, active or passive.

1. It’s a big factory. Five hundred people are employed here (employ).
2. Water (cover) most of the Earth’s surface.
3. Most of the Earth’s surface (cover) by water.
4. The park gates (lock) at 6.10 p.m. every night.
5. The letter (post) a week ago and it (arrive) yesterday.
6. The boat (sink) quickly but fortunately everybody (rescue).
7. Ron’s parents (die) when he was very young. He and his sister (bring) up by their grandparents.
8. I was born in London but I (grow) up in the north of England.
9. While I was on holiday, my camera (steal) from my hotel room.
10. While I was on holiday, my camera (disappear) from my hotel room.
11. Why (Sue resign) from her job? Didn’t she enjoy it?
12. Why (Bill sack) from his job? What did he do wrong?
13. The company is not independent. It (own) by a much larger company.
14. I saw an accident last night. Somebody (call) an ambulance but nobody (injure) so the ambulance (not/need).
15. Where (these photographs take)? In London? (You/take) them?

Exercise 2: Rewrite these sentences. Instead of using” somebody” or” they”, write a passive sentence.

1. Somebody has cleaned the room. The room……………………………………………
2. They have postponed the concert. The concert………………………………………….
3. Somebody is using the computer at the moment. The computer…………………………
4. I didn’t realize that somebody was recording our conversation. I didn’t realize that our conversation…………………………………………
5. When we got to the stadium, we found that they had cancelled the game. When we got to the stadium, we found that………………………………
6. They are building a new ring road around the city. …………………………………………………….
7. They have built a new hospital near the airport.

Exercise 3: Make sentences from the words in brackets. Sometimes the verb is active, sometimes passive.

1. There is somebody behind us. (I think/we/follow) I think we’re being followed.
2. The room looks different. (You/ paint?)
3. My car has disappeared. ( it/ steal) It………………………………………………….
4. My umbrella has disappeared. (Somebody/take). Somebody………………………………..
5. Tom gets a higher salary now. (He/ promote)…………………………………………..
6. Ann can’t use her office at the moment. (It/ decorate)………………………………………….;;
7. The photocopier broke down yesterday, but now it’s OK. (It/work again it /repair.)…………………………………
8. The police have found the people they were looking for. (Two people/ arrest/ last night)…………………………..
9. A tree was lying across the road. (It/ blown down/ in the storm)……………………………..
10. The man next door disappeared six months ago.( nobody/ see/since then)
11. I was mugged on my way home a few nights ago. (You/ever/mug?)

Exercise 4: Choose the right alternative

1- We……………………………..by a loud noise during the night.

A- woke up B - are woken up C- were woken up D- were waking up

2-There is somebody walking behind us. I think…………………………………….

1. are following B-we are being followed C-we are followed D- we are being following

3-“Where…………………………? ” In London.

A-were you born B- are you born C- have you been born D-did you born

4- The train……………………………arrive at 11.30 but it was an hour late.

1. Supposed to B-is supposed to C- was supposed to
2. Were………………………………..?Which hairdresser did you go to?

A-Did you cut your hair B- have you cut your hair C-did you have cut your hear C-did you have your hair cut

Exercise 5: Choose the right alternative

From: Max

To: Sara

Subject: Trip to Namibia

Hi Sara, How are you? I’m having a great time in Namibia.

Our group is small and (1) we were looked rafter/ we were being looked after very well by our guide.

(2) We‘ve been shown/ we were shown some amazing things already and (3) we’ve seen/we’ve been seen some fantastic landscapes..

Last weekend we went to a National Park. (4)We were driven / we were driving to a watering hole where an amazing range of animals (5) could be seeing/ could be seen. We were told that the numbers (6) were risen/have risen since the National Park (7) founded/ was founded.

(8) I ‘d been warned/ I’ d been warning that the accommodation there was quite basic, but it was fine.(9) we were given / we were giving a big tent each, and there are outdoor showers and so on, which(10) are kept/have kept very clean.

Our guide tells us a lot of funny stories. He (11) was sent/ sent to South Africa by his family to work in a bank, but he (12) hated/ was hated it. So he (13) has behaved/ behaved very badly in order to (14) lose/ lost his job. He kept us laughing for hours.

Tomorrow (15) we’ll be joined/ we’ll be joining another group and going to see some rock paintings.(16) They were discovered/ They discovered quite recently , so we’re one of the first groups (17) to be shown/ to have shown them .

I’ll email you again when I can (18) get connected/ have connected to the Internet.

Love, Max

Exercise 6: Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Do not use by unless it is important to the meaning.

1. The instructor has marked all the assignments.

All the assignments have been marked.

1. My hairdresser kept me waiting for half an hour.

I…………………………………………………………………………………

1. The students must their own fees for the course.

The fees for this course………………………………………….

Do you suppose your brother could have sent the text?

Do you suppose that text………………………………………………..

1. Solar panels supply all the power for this house.

All the power for this house…………………………………………………..

1. During the summer, the café was employing more waiters every week.

During the summer, more waiters …………………………………………………………

1. Nobody informed the police that there had been a mistake.

The police……………………………………………………………………………………

1. Where will your company post you next year?

Where will you……………………………………………………………..

1. The news about the war worried Josephine.

Josephine……………………………………………………………………………….

1. I’ve still got the money because no one has claimed it.

I’ve still got the money because it…………………………………………….

1. Has anyone ever asked you for your opinion?

Have you ………………………………………………………..

1. People shouldn’t allow children to watch that kind of TV program.

Children…………………………………………………………………………………………..

1. All visitors must wear identity badges.

Identity badges…………………………………………

1. Someone must have changed the time of the meeting.

The time of the meeting……………………………………………………

1. When will someone deliver the food for the party?

When…………………………………………………………………………

Exercise 7: There are mistakes in the following sentences. Identify the mistakes and correct them.

1. My neighbor is very proud of her grandson who (born) last week.
2. I’m very fond of this old necklace, it (was belonged) to my grandmother.
3. My family live in Dubai, but it (was educated) in Switzerland.
4. I’m afraid I can’t lend you my car. It’s (repairing) this week.
5. The bridge (was collapsed) during the floods, but fortunately no one was using it at the time.
6. If you don’t watch the barbecue carefully, someone (will get burn).
7. I am sorry I am late I (got hold up) in the traffic.
8. When did you realize that your bag (had been disappeared)
9. Children under the age of 16 ( do not allow) in the jaccuzi.