

# Passive Voice: Overview

**FORM:**

“TO BE” + past participle (pp)		
simple present	<b>am/is/are</b>	+ <b>pp</b>
present continuous	<b>am/is/are being</b>	+ <b>pp</b>
simple past	<b>was/were</b>	+ <b>pp</b>
past continuous	<b>was/were being</b>	+ <b>pp</b>
present perfect	<b>have/has been</b>	+ <b>pp</b>
past perfect	<b>had been</b>	+ <b>pp</b>
future (will)	<b>will be</b>	+ <b>pp</b>
future (be going to)	<b>am/is/are going to be</b>	+ <b>pp</b>

**USE:**

The passive voice is used to **emphasize the action or result of the action** and not the person who performs the action. The passive is often used when it is unknown or unimportant who performed the action. The passive can be formed with any tense, but is rarely used with the present perfect progressive or past perfect progressive.

In some cases, the passive is used with **“by + the doer of the action”**. This “by” phrase is used:

- to add new information (*Patients are seen **by** Dr. Smith on weekdays and **by** Dr. Allen on weekends.*)
- with proper names/famous people (*The light bulb was invented **by** Edison.*)
- when the “doer” is unexpected (*This painting was done **by** a young child!*)

The “by” phrase is not used when the “doer” is understood or obvious.

**EXAMPLES:**

*Wine is produced in Canada.*  
*Some food was dropped on the carpet.*  
*Many trees in Canadian forests have been cut down.*  
*The theory of evolution was developed **by** Charles Darwin.*

*Change the following active sentences into the PASSIVE VOICE. Use a “by” phrase only if necessary.*

1. Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet*.

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2. The mail carrier delivered the mail at 10 o'clock.

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3. Wine makers have produced excellent wine in Canada for two decades.

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4. Somebody hit my car in the parking lot yesterday.

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5. The cleaning staff clean this office every night.

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6. The painters are going to paint my house this weekend.

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7. Charles Banting invented insulin.

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8. Somebody stole her bicycle yesterday.

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