

# Voice



~ English Grammar · Competitive Exams ~



**Voice** (Active & Passive) shows whether the **subject does the action** or **receives it**.

## Active Voice

The **subject** **does** the action — the doer is important.

Ravi teaches Mohan.

I have written a letter.

## Passive Voice

The **subject** **receives** the action — the deed is important.

Mohan is taught by Ravi.

A letter has been written by me.

## ① The Golden Rule: Active → Passive

1. **Object** of the active sentence becomes the **subject** of the passive.
2. Verb changes to **be + V3** (past participle), fixed by the tense.
3. The old **subject** moves to the end as **by + object**.
4. Helping verb is chosen **according to the tense** of the active verb.

Ravi teaches Mohan



Mohan is taught by Ravi

object → subject · verb → be+V3 · subject → by+object



Only **transitive verbs** (verbs that take an object) can be turned into the passive — no object, no passive!

## ② Change the Pronoun →

When a pronoun swaps its place, it swaps its case too.

*Object → Subject*

me → **I** · us → **we**

him → **he** · her → **she**

them → **they** · whom → **who**

you → **you** · it → **it**

*Subject → by + object*

I → **by me** · we → **by us**

he → **by him** · she → **by her**

they → **by them** · who → **by whom**

you → **by you** · it → **by it**

## ③ Tense-wise Structures

| Tense              | Active               | Passive (Obj. + ... + by Sub.)   |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Present Indefinite | V1 / V-s             | <b>is/am/are</b> + V3            |
| Present Continuous | is/am/are + V-ing    | <b>is/am/are being</b> + V3      |
| Present Perfect    | has/have + V3        | <b>has/have been</b> + V3        |
| Past Indefinite    | V2                   | <b>was/were</b> + V3             |
| Past Continuous    | was/were + V-ing     | <b>was/were being</b> + V3       |
| Past Perfect       | had + V3             | <b>had been</b> + V3             |
| Future Indefinite  | shall/will + V1      | <b>shall/will be</b> + V3        |
| Future Perfect     | shall/will have + V3 | <b>shall/will have been</b> + V3 |



*No passive form for: Future Continuous & all Perfect Continuous tenses (Present / Past / Future). Just leave them in the active!*

## ④ Tenses in Action

A = Active · P = Passive

### Present Indefinite

A: I sing a song.

P: A song is sung by me.

### Present Perfect

A: Mohan has taken tea.

P: Tea has been taken by Mohan.

### Past Continuous

A: He was preparing tea.

P: Tea was being prepared by him.

### Future Indefinite

A: Her father will meet her.

P: She will be met by her father.

### Present Continuous

A: He is writing a letter.

P: A letter is being written by him.

### Past Indefinite

A: He sold a car.

P: A car was sold by him.

### Past Perfect

A: I had read the book.

P: The book had been read by me.

### Future Perfect

A: She will have prepared tea.

P: Tea will have been prepared by her.

## Negatives – where does 'not' go?

Put **not** right after the first auxiliary (is/are/am/was/were/has/have/had/shall/will).

A: I do not abuse him.

P: He is not abused by me.

A: Sita is not singing a song.

P: A song is not being sung by Sita.

A: He did not write a letter.

P: A letter was not written by him.

A: We have not solved the sum.

P: The sum has not been solved by us.



Golden hook → whatever the tense, the main verb never changes its form – in the passive it is **always V3** (third form).

## ⑤ Interrogative Sentences ?

**Yes/No type** → Aux. + Obj. + V3 + by + Sub. + ?

**A:** Do you sing a song?

**P:** Is a song sung by you?

**A:** Have you seen the Taj Mahal?

**P:** Has the Taj Mahal been seen by you?

**A:** Did she write a letter?

**P:** Was a letter written by her?

**A:** Will you do it?

**P:** Will it be done by you?

**W/H type** → W/H word + Aux. + Obj. + V3 + by + Sub. + ?

**A:** Why does she call me?

**P:** Why am I called by her?

**A:** Where did you spend the money?

**P:** Where was the money spent by you?

*Special: 'What' & 'Who' questions*

**What** → keep What at the front.

**A:** What do you want? **P:** What is wanted by you?

**Who** → becomes **By whom** ... ?

**A:** Who gave this book? **P:** By whom was this book given?

**A:** Who teaches you? **P:** By whom are you taught?

## ⑥ Passive of Modals

Structure → Obj. + **Modal + be + V3** + by + Sub.

Modals: can, could, may, might, must, shall, will, should, would, ought to.

**A:** I can do it.

**P:** It can be done by me.

**A:** May I open the door?

**P:** May the door be opened by me?

**A:** He could not do this work.

**P:** This work could not be done by him.

**A:** One should keep one's promise.

**P:** Promise should be kept.

## ⑦ *Passive of Imperatives* →

Orders, advice & requests — each has its own passive shape.

**Order** → Let + Obj. + be + V3

A: Open the box. P: Let the box be opened.

A: Switch off the fan. P: Let the fan be switched off.

**Advice** → Obj. + should + be + V3

A: Help the poor. P: The poor should be helped.

A: Love the children. P: The children should be loved.

**Request (Please/Kindly)** → You are requested to + VI + Obj.

A: Kindly read this letter. P: You are requested to read this letter.

A: Please give me a pen. P: You are requested to give me a pen.

**Intransitive verb** → You are ordered/advised to + VI

A: Go there. P: You are ordered to go there.

A: Work hard. P: You are advised to work hard.

## ⑧ *Passive of Infinitives*

Change **to + VI** → **to be + V3**.

A: There is nothing to do.

P: There is nothing to be done.

A: I want you to finish the work.

P: I want the work to be finished by you.

A: They were to play the match.

P: The match was to be played by them.

A: It is time to take tea.

P: It is time for tea to be taken.

✓ A command starts with a verb → use *Let ... be + V3*. A request starts with *Please/Kindly* → use *You are requested to...*

## ⑨ Verbs with Two Objects

Either object may become the subject — the other keeps **to** before it.

**A:** He teaches us Sanskrit.

**P:** We are taught Sanskrit by him. / Sanskrit is taught to us by him.

**A:** He has given me a present.

**P:** I have been given a present by him. / A present has been given to me by him.

**A:** Mother told us a story.

**P:** We were told a story by mother. / A story was told to us by mother.

## ⑩ Verb + Preposition

The preposition **stays put**, right after V3.

**A:** I am listening to him.

**P:** He is being listened to by me.

**A:** He turned down my request.

**P:** My request was turned down by him.

**A:** A bus ran over a child.

**P:** A child was run over by a bus.

**A:** They laughed at the beggar.

**P:** The beggar was laughed at by them.

## When 'by' is NOT used

Some verbs of feeling take a fixed preposition instead of **by**.

married **to**

satisfied **with**

contained **in**

known **to**

surprised **at**

tired **of**

pleased **with**

interested **in**

annoyed **with**

**A:** Mohan married Gita.

**P:** Gita was married to Mohan.

**A:** My work satisfied the officer.

**P:** The officer was satisfied with my work.

**A:** His success surprised me.

**P:** I was surprised at his success.

**A:** This box contains pens.

**P:** Pens are contained in this box.



When the doer is unknown or unimportant (*somebody, people, we, they*), simply drop the 'by' phrase in the passive.

## ★ Special & Tricky Cases

**Indefinite doer** (somebody/people) → drop 'by'.

A: Someone has picked my pocket. P: My pocket has been picked.

**No one / Nobody** → use **not ... by anyone/anybody**.

A: No one has cheated you. P: You have not been cheated by anyone.

**It is time to...** → It is time + for + Obj. + to be + V3.

A: It is time to reap the harvest. P: It is time for the harvest to be reaped.

**Reporting verbs** (say/believe) → It is said/believed that...

A: People say that he is honest. P: It is said that he is honest.

### Miscellaneous quick pairs

A: One must do one's duty. P: Duty must be done.

A: Sit down. P: Be seated.

A: May he live long! P: It is prayed that he may live long.

A: May I go out? P: Am I allowed to go out?

A: Who cursed the old woman? P: By whom was the old woman cursed?

### Quick Tips

- ✓ Main verb in the passive is **always V3** — never V1 or V2.
- ✓ Pick the auxiliary from the **tense of the active verb**.
- ✓ Modals & infinitives always insert **be** before V3.
- ✓ No passive: Future Continuous & all Perfect Continuous tenses.
- ✓ Keep any **preposition** attached to the verb; keep **not** after the first auxiliary.

✓ Exam habit → first find the **object**, decide the **tense**, then build: object + [be-form] + V3 + by + subject.

## Practice – Change the Voice

Turn each active sentence into the passive voice.

1. Ravi teaches Mohan.
2. He is writing a letter.
3. Mohan has taken tea.
4. He sold a car.
5. The boys were digging a hole.
6. I had read the book.
7. Her father will meet her soon.
8. Somebody has picked my pocket.
9. Open the door.
10. Help the poor.
11. I can do it.
12. Who gave this book?
13. Do you sing a song?
14. He teaches us Sanskrit.
15. I am listening to him.
16. No one has cheated you.

### Answer Key

- 1→ Mohan is taught by Ravi.
- 2→ A letter is being written by him.
- 3→ Tea has been taken by Mohan.
- 4→ A car was sold by him.
- 5→ A hole was being dug by the boys.
- 6→ The book had been read by me.
- 7→ She will be met by her father soon.
- 8→ My pocket has been picked.
- 9→ Let the door be opened.
- 10→ The poor should be helped.
- 11→ It can be done by me.
- 12→ By whom was this book given?
- 13→ Is a song sung by you?
- 14→ We are taught Sanskrit by him. / Sanskrit is taught to us by him.
- 15→ He is being listened to by me.
- 16→ You have not been cheated by anyone.

☆ Flip the voice – keep the meaning! ☆