

PASSIVE VOICE





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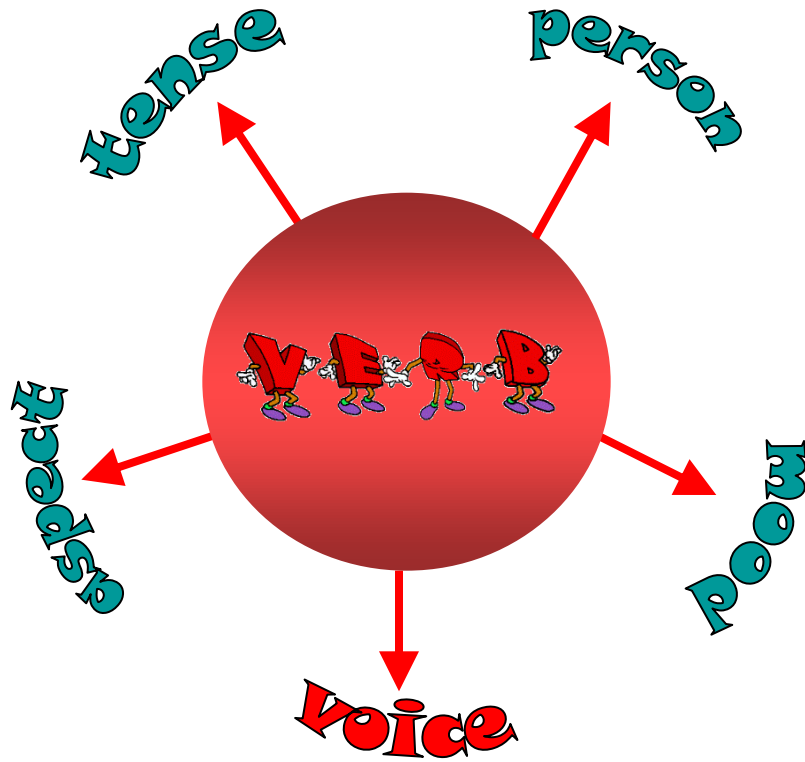




chapter 1: introduction



general considerations



“Voice” is linked to the verb because it is considered one of the features that define it, together with “tense”, “person”, “aspect” or “mood”.

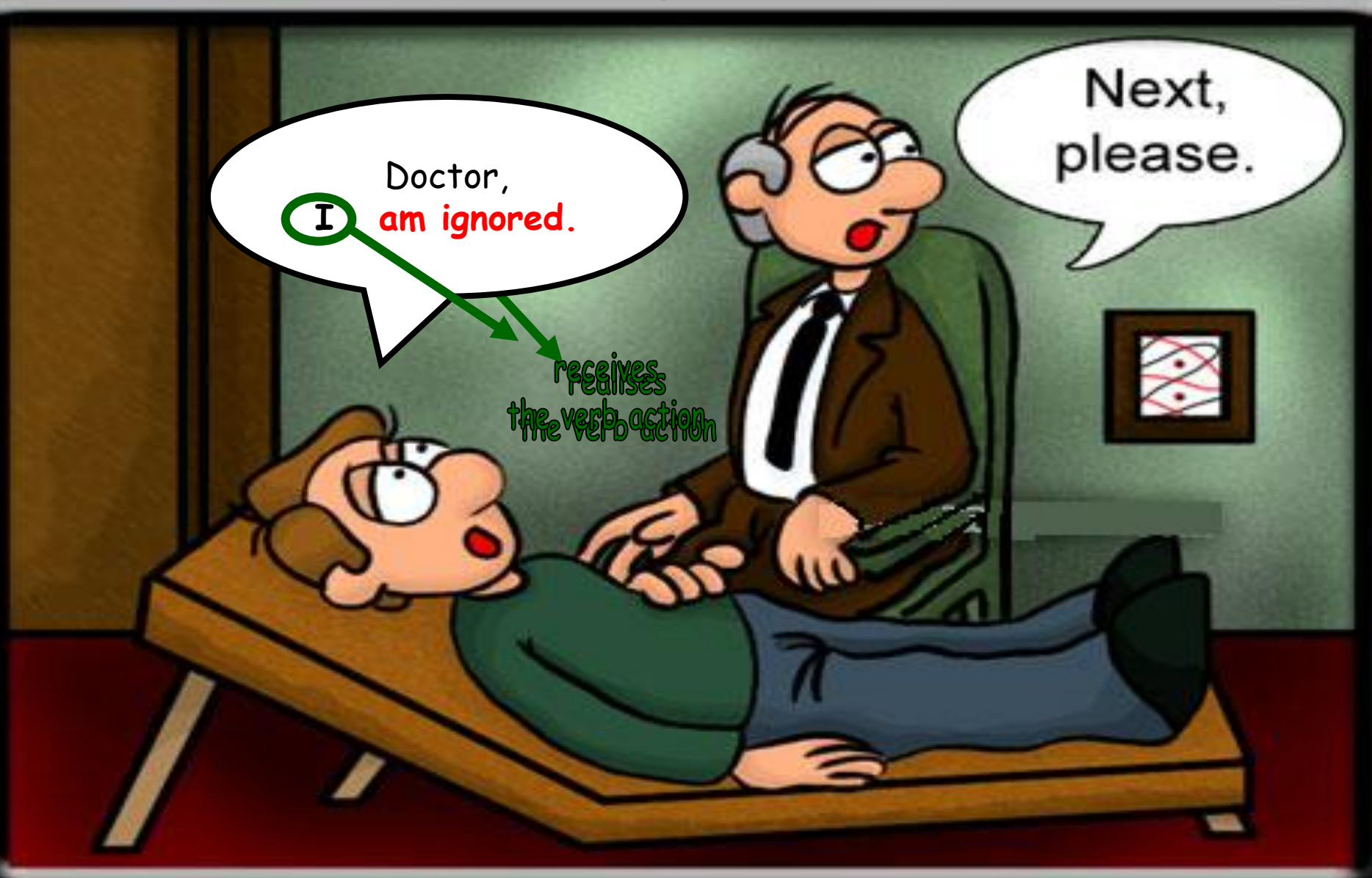
Voice tells us about the agent and the patient of the verb action and it involves a contrast between **“Active”** and **“Passive”**.

In an active sentence, the subject realises the verb action whereas in a passive sentence, the subject receives the verb action.

Let's have a look at some examples...



deducing the rule



deducing the rule

WHICH CHANGES
HAVE TAKEN PLACE
FROM ACTIVE TO
PASSIVE ?

realises
he receives
the verb action

He has been
caught in the
chimney, Sarge.



changes

In English we use the preposition "by" to introduce the agent

Active

The young policeman has caught Father Christmas

SUBJECT

VERB

OBJECT

SUBJECT

BE (same
tense as
Main Verb)

**Parti
ciple**
(of Main
Verb)

**(by +
AGENT)**

Passive

Father Christmas has been caught by the young policeman

USES

In English we use the passive voice for several reasons, all of them important.

- When we do not know the identity of the agent of the action.
- When it is not important to mention the agent of the action.
- When we want to avoid mentioning the agent of the action.
(In these three cases, the agent complement is omitted)
- When we want to put emphasis on the agent of the action by means of the "end-focus" theory.

But for whatever reason, the passive voice is a very useful linguistic instrument and we use it *in English much more often* than we do in Spanish. This is probably the most important difference.





chapter 2:

normal passive





**Normal Passives follow the
three general steps to form
passive sentences:**

1. OBJECT → PASSIVE SUBJECT

2. VERB → BE+PARTICIPLE

3. SUBJECT → AGENT COMPLEMENT

1. OBJECT → PASSIVE SUBJECT

To transform an active sentence into a passive one, it is commonly believed that the main verb in active should be *transitive*, i.e., there should be a **Direct Object** in the sentence. However, the English language proves that a passive sentence can also be created from the **Indirect Object** in the active sentence. Therefore, this leads us to say that *to form a passive sentence we need to have an Object in the active counterpart.*

Whatever the object, we must be very careful when selecting it and turning it into a passive subject, bearing in mind that *the syntactic function of subject in English is realised by a noun phrase, not by a prepositional phrase.*

"The burglars had cut an enormous hole in the steel door."

"In the steel door had been cut by the burglars an enormous hole" ❌👎

"An enormous hole had been cut by the burglars in the steel door." ✅👍

In addition to this, a subject can never be an object pronoun. Therefore, in those cases *where the indirect object is realised by an object pronoun, we must change this into a subject pronoun in order to turn it into a passive subject.* ☠️

"They saw him in Australia"

"He was seen in Australia"

2. VERB → BE+PARTICIPLE



CHANGES IN VERB TENSES ARE...

ACTIVE TENSES

- ★ Present Simple - buy/buys
- ★ Present Continuous - is buying
- ★ Past Simple - bought
- ★ Past Continuous - was buying
- ★ Present Perfect Simple - have/has bought
- ★ Past Perfect Simple - had bought
- ★ Future Simple - will buy
- ★ Simple Condicional - would buy
- ★ Perfect Conditional - would have bought
- ★ Modals - must/should buy
- ★ Infinitive - to buy
- ★ Gerund - buying

PASSIVE TENSES

- Am/are/is bought
- Is being bought
- Was/were bought
- Was/were being bought
- Have/has been bought
- Had been bought
- Will be bought
- Would be bought
- Would have been bought
- Must/should be bought
- To be bought
- Being buying

3. SUBJECT → AGENT COMPLEMENT

WHEN IS THE
AGENT
COMPLEMENT
NOT
NECESSARY?



3 when the active subject is obvious. (i.e., normally professions that can be understood from the meaning of the verb action)

"The milkman delivers the milk every day"

"The milk is delivered ~~by the milkman~~ every day"

"The dustmen took the rubbish away this morning"

"The rubbish was taken away ~~by the dustmen~~ this morning"

In these cases the passive voice is more often used than the active voice.

your own practice



In some districts farmers use pigs to find truffles

answer



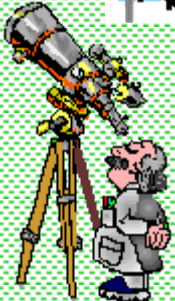
The policeman caught the burglar red-handed

answer



A very young woman interviewed him for the post

answer



Astronomers have just found a new constellation

answer



check your answers



In some districts, pigs are used to find truffles



check your answers



The burglar was caught red-handed



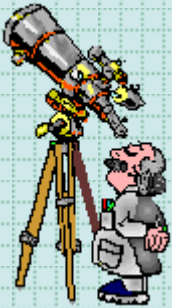
check your answers



He was interviewed for the post by a very young woman

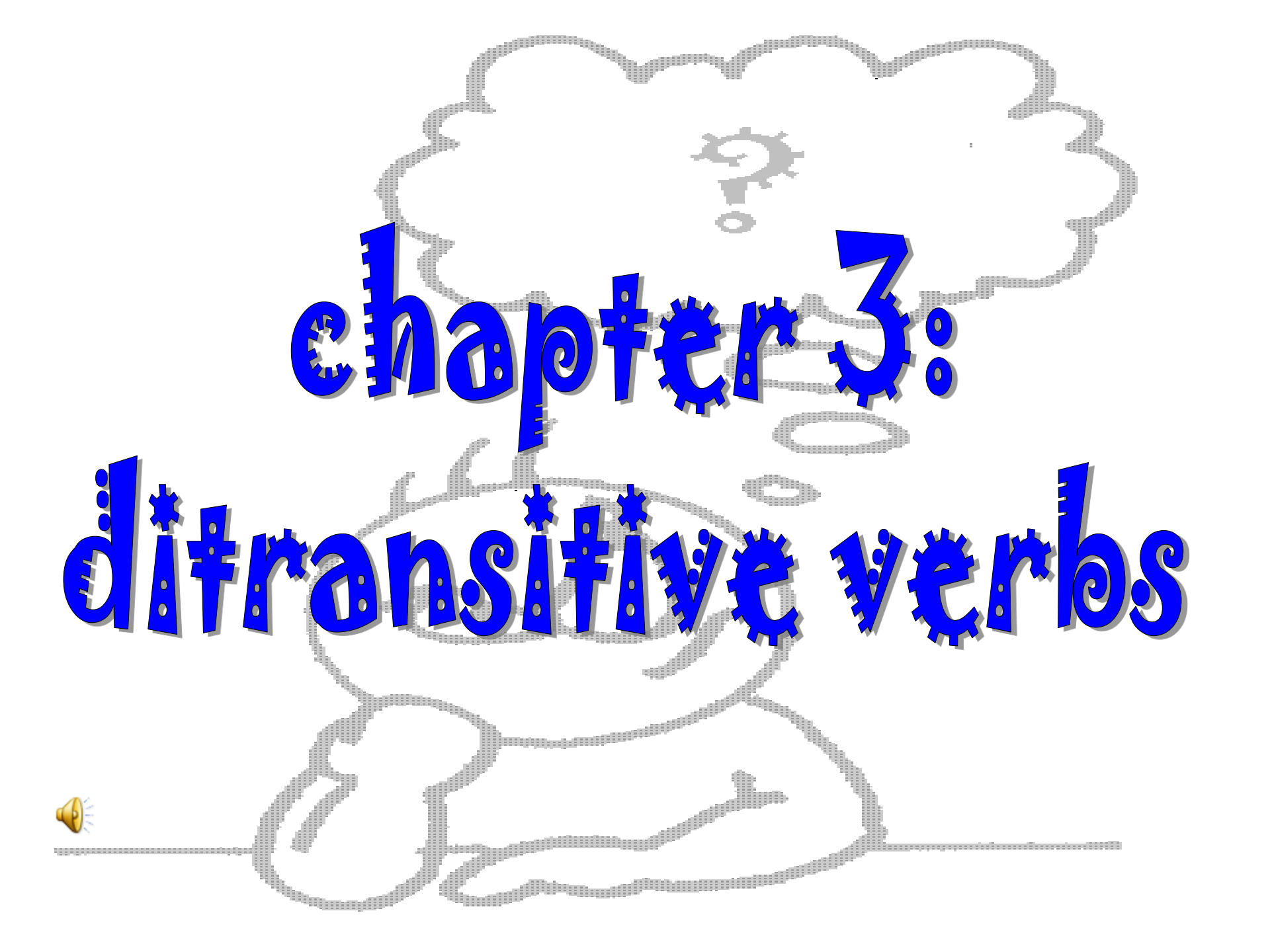


check your answers



A new constellation has just been found





chapter 3:

ditransitive verbs



Some verbs are considered ditransitive verbs because they have two objects: a **DIRECT OBJECT** & an **INDIRECT OBJECT**.
Some of these verbs are:

Give
Send
Show

Lend
Ask
Tell

Order
Pay
Bring

Hand
Grant
Allow

With these verbs, changes into passive can be done in two different ways. This is called the double passive. One of these constructions is more frequently used than the other.

Active

The Ministry of Education granted them €2000

SUBJECT

VERB

I.O.

D.O.

PASSIVE 1

PASSIVE 2



PASSIVE 1

D.O. → PASSIVE SUBJECT

Active

The Ministry of Education granted them €2000

SUBJECT	VERB	I.O.	D.O.
---------	------	------	------

SUBJ	VERB	I.O.	AGENT COMPLEMENT
------	------	------	------------------

Passive

€2000 were granted to them by the Ministry of Education

KEEP YOUR   ON THIS:



- ✱ The **Indirect Object** is always preceded by the preposition **TO** (even if it is not used in the active) because the passive construction requires it.
- ✱ This type of transformation is **less frequently** done. And never is it used with the verbs "ask", "tell", "order" and "allow".

PASSIVE 2

I.O. → PASSIVE SUBJECT

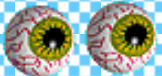
Active

The Ministry of Education granted them €2000

SUBJECT	VERB	I.O.	D.O.
---------	------	------	------

SUBJ	VERB	I.O.	AGENT COMPLEMENT
------	------	------	------------------

They were granted €2000 by the Ministry of Education



REMEMBER!!



INDIRECT OBJECT (object pronoun) – PASSIVE SUBJECT (subject pronoun)

your own practice



He gave the dog a rasher of bacon

answer



Jill's father doesn't allow him to play in a band

answer



His mother brought him a wooden horse from Paris

answer



I've just sent a letter of complaint to the company

answer



check your answers

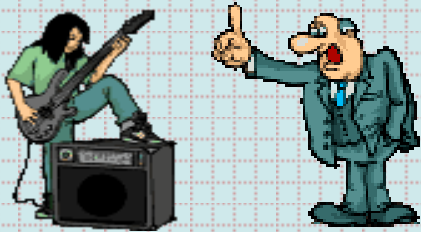


The dog was given a rasher of bacon

A rasher of bacon was given to the dog



check your answers



Jill isn't allowed (by his father) to play in a band



check your answers



He was brought a wooden horse from Paris by his mother

A wooden horse from Paris was brought to him by his mother



check your answers



The company has just been sent a letter of complaint

A letter of complaint has just been sent to the company





chapter 4: reporting verbs



This type of passive occurs when in the active we find a construction like this:

Active	IMPERSONAL SUBJECT (They, people, everybody, etc.)	VERB (reporting)	THAT- CLAUSE
---------------	--	----------------------------	-------------------------

*

* Reporting verbs are those used to report what someone says or has said. Some of them fit into the group of verbs of thinking or opinion. And they are verbs like the following ones:

Say
Believe
Understand

Know
Assume
Claim

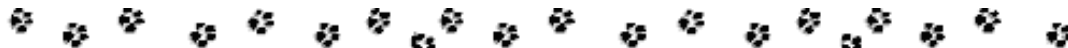
Consider
Feel
Find

Estimate
Report
Think

With this type of construction, changes into passive can be done in two different ways.

PASSIVE 1

PASSIVE 2



PASSIVE 1

Active

Most people believe that it's best to let the intelligent

IMPERSONAL SUBJECT
(They, people, everybody, etc.)

VERB
(reporting)

**THAT-
CLAUSE**

IMPERSONAL SUBJECT
"IT"

**PASSIVE
VERB**

**THAT-
CLAUSE**

Passive

It is believed that he didn't steal the money

KEEP YOUR  ON THIS:

- ☀ Notice how this passive construction is also an Impersonal Passive since it is introduced by a so-called "preparatory IT" which is, in fact, an impersonal subject.
- ☀ This type of passive would correspond to the Spanish "pasiva refleja" and would be translated into "SE... (dice, cree, comenta...)"

PASSIVE 2

Active

Most people believe that it's the fault of the intelligent

IMPERSONAL SUBJECT
(They, people, everybody, etc.)

VERB
(reporting)

**THAT-
CLAUSE**

**SUBJECT
IN THAT-CLAUSE**

**PASSIVE
VERB**

(NOT) TO INF/PERFECT INF
(of the Verb in That-clause)

He is believed to be the intelligent

Passive

KEEP YOUR  ON THIS:

- ☀ This type of passive would also correspond to the Spanish "pasiva refleja" and would be translated into "SE... (dice, cree, comenta...)". Otherwise, it would sound unnatural to translate it into Spanish as "Él es dicho no haber robado el dinero"



your own practice



Everybody assumes that Mr. Burns is a mean person

answer



Some people claim that Mary Shelley didn't write "Frankenstein"

answer



People consider that he acts as a rebel

answer



People think dolphins are extremely intelligent animals

answer



check your answers



It is assumed that Mr. Burns is a mean person

Mr. Burns is assumed to be a mean person



check your answers



It is claimed that "Frankenstein" wasn't written by Mary Shelley

"Frankenstein" is claimed not to have been written by Mary Shelley



check your answers



It is considered that he acts as a rebel

He is considered to act as a rebel




check your answers



It is thought that dolphins are extremely intelligent animals

Dolphins are thought to be extremely intelligent animals





chapter 5: prepositional or phrasal verbs



If we have a **prepositional** or **phrasal verb** in an active sentence, we should follow the same steps as in the normal passive, but bearing in mind that **the preposition or the particle must be retained in the passive construction.**



Active

The public shouted at the PM during his speech

SUBJECT

**PREPOSITIONAL OR
PHRASAL VERB**

OBJECT

Passive

SUBJECT

**PASSIVE
VERB**

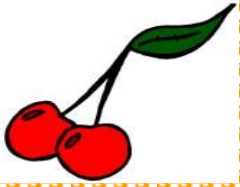
**PREPOSITION
/ PARTICLE**

(BY- AGENT)

The PM was shouted at during his speech



your own practice



They usually pick up the cherries at the beginning of May

answer



The spacecraft ran over the alien

answer



His father has told him off this morning

answer

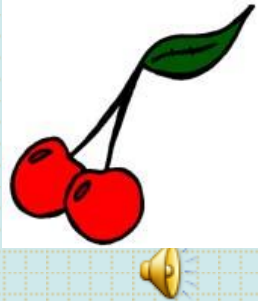


Firemen put out the fire after five hours fighting

answer



check your answers



Cherries are usually picked up at the beginning of May



check your answers



The alien was run over by the spacecraft



check your answers



He has been told off by his father this morning

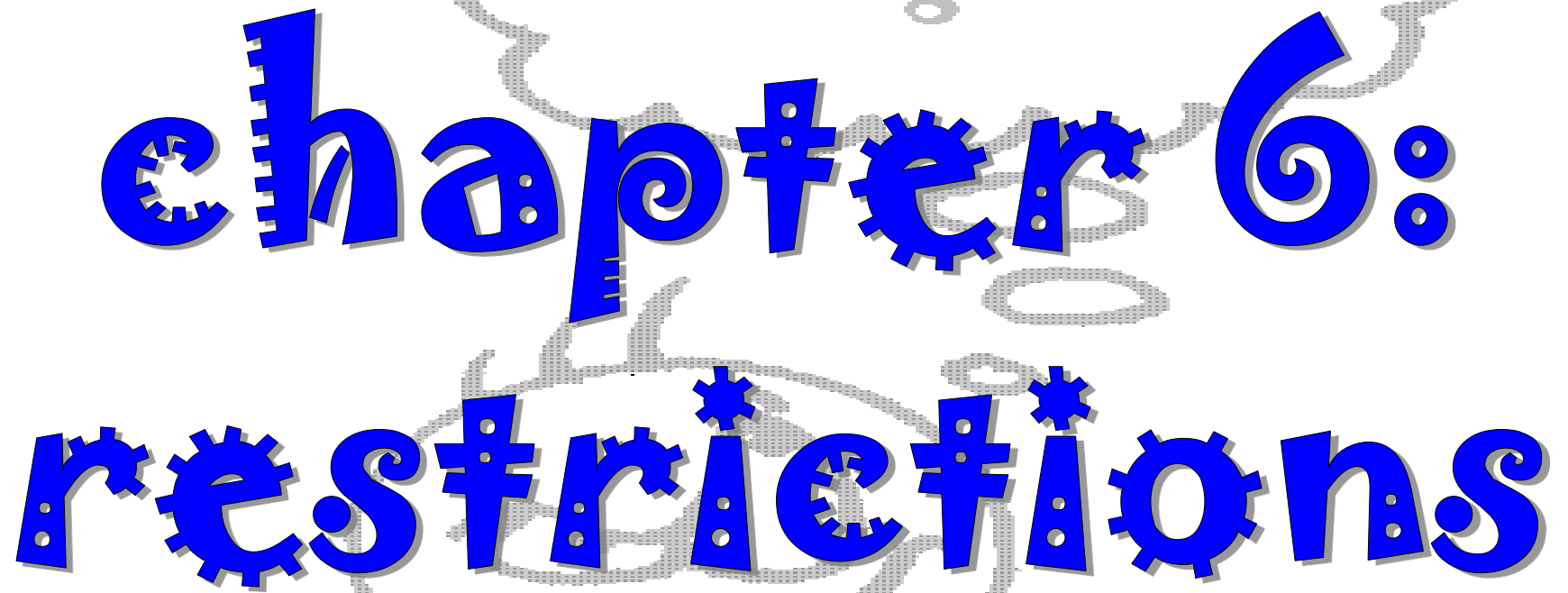


check your answers



The fire was put out after five hours fighting





chapter 6: restrictions





Some verbs which are transitive cannot be made passive. Some of them are:

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| • Have | • Love | • Like |
| • Lack | • Hold | • Resemble |
| • Fit | • Suit | • Become |
| • Agree with | • Look at | • Hurt |

*They have a nice house
He lacks confidence
The auditorium holds 500 people
That shirt doesn't suit you
I like this place
They hurt each other
She looked at herself in the mirror*





chapter 7:

causative have/get



deducing the rule



deducing the rule



We use the structure...

HAVE/GET	OBJECT	PARTICIPLE
----------	--------	------------

1. ...to describe services done for us by someone else.

For example, compare the sentences:

Last year I had new tiles put on the roof

Last year I put new tiles on the roof

A worker came to my house to put the tiles on the roof

I climbed onto the roof and put the tiles myself

2. ... to describe misfortunes which happen to us, caused by an unspecified person.

Peter had his car stolen

Karen had her leg broken playing football

Using GET instead of *have* means managing to do something.

It was difficult but we got the painting done in the end



your own practice



(He/always/his teeth/check/once a year)

answer



He was very upset when he found (he/all his money/steal)

answer



(I/my boots/mend/twice this month)

answer



It was rather messy but in the end (we/the kitchen/paint)

answer



check your answers



He always has his teeth checked once a year



check your answers



He was very upset when he found he had all his money stolen



check your answers



I have had my boots mended twice this month



check your answers



It was rather messy but in the end we got the kitchen painted





chapter 8:

summing-up



1

**NORMAL
PASSIVE**

- Active Object --- Passive Subject
- Active Verb --- BE + PARTICIPLE
- Active Subject --- Agent Complement

BE in the same tense as Main Verb:
 In present: am/is/are
 In past: was/were
 In present cont: am/is/are being
 In past cont: was/were being
 In present perf: have/has been
 In past perf: had been
 In future: will be ...

2

**DITRANSITIVE
VERBS****Active:** S + V + IO + DO

Passive: DO(subject)+V(passive)+TO+IO+AC
 IO(subject)+V(passive)+DO+AC

3

**REPORTING
VERBS****Active:** S(impersonal)+V(reporting)+THAT CLAUSE**Passive:** IT+V(passive)+THAT CLAUSE

Subject(in That-clause)+V(passive)+(NOT) TO INF/PERFECT INF

4

**CAUSATIVE
HAVE/GET****HAVE/GET + OBJECT + PARTICIPLE**

- ★ services done for us by someone else
- ★ misfortunes which happen to us
- ★ GET: managing to do something



- ⊕ **Agent Complement:** NOT USED when: 1. pronoun, 2. indefinite, 3. obvious
- ⊕ **Phrasal or prepositional verbs:** the preposition or particle is retained in the passive
- ⊕ **Restrictions:** have, lack, hold, love, like, resemble, become, agree with, look at, hurt, fit..



Easy, isn't it?



chapter 9: exercises



miscellaneous

1. Turn into passive. (Normal, ditransitive, with reporting verbs, with phrasal verbs, etc.)

1. Somebody will wake you at seven o'clock.
2. Stella has made a moving speech.
3. One wears a top hat at a wedding, sometimes.
4. They consider that the plan is perfect.
5. They all expected the Prime Minister at three o'clock.
6. Nobody reads my poems nowadays. (negative verb)
7. We shall send a letter to John.
8. People think that Shakespeare didn't exist.
9. The doctor asked Mary a great many questions.
10. The Minister granted me an interview.
11. An old servant looks after the house.
12. You must write down everything I say.
13. Jane won the poetry competition.
14. This bike belongs to my sister.
15. They have put off their wedding for six months.



chapter 10: links





e-passives

- Ⓢ <http://wwwedu.ge.ch/cptic/prospective/projets/anglais/exercises/welcome.html>
- Ⓢ www.smic.be/smic5022/exercisesgrammar.htm
- Ⓢ www.miguelmllop.com/
- Ⓢ www.english-hilfen.de/en/
- Ⓢ www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/grammar
- Ⓢ www.english-4u.de
- Ⓢ www.nonstopenglish.com
- Ⓢ <http://a4esl.org/q/h/vm/active-passive.html>
- Ⓢ <http://www.english-4u.de/passive.html>
- Ⓢ <http://perso.wanadoo.es/autoenglish/freeexercises.htm>
- Ⓢ <http://eslzone1.tripod.com/id4.html>
- Ⓢ <http://perso.wanadoo.es/autoenglish/gr.pas.i.htm>
- Ⓢ <http://www.isabelperez.com/grammar.htm>
- Ⓢ <http://www.isabelperez.com/hotpot/dogphone.htm>
- Ⓢ <http://www.isabelperez.com/hotpot/passivemobiles.htm>
- Ⓢ http://netgrammar.altec.org/Units/Unit_9/menu.html
- Ⓢ http://netgrammar.altec.org/Units/Unit_9/a101c9_201000.html
- Ⓢ <http://www.usingenglish.com/handouts/46.html>
- Ⓢ <http://www.usingenglish.com/handouts/152.html>
- Ⓢ http://esl.about.com/library/quiz/blgrquiz_passive1.htm
- Ⓢ http://esl.about.com/library/quiz/blgrquiz_passive2.htm
- Ⓢ http://www.mansioningles.com/gram55_ej1.htm
- Ⓢ <http://members.cox.net/lenco1/grammarpractice/verbs/actpass.htm>
- Ⓢ <http://www.churchillhouse.com/english/exercises/parapal/multichoice.swf?address=passives>

