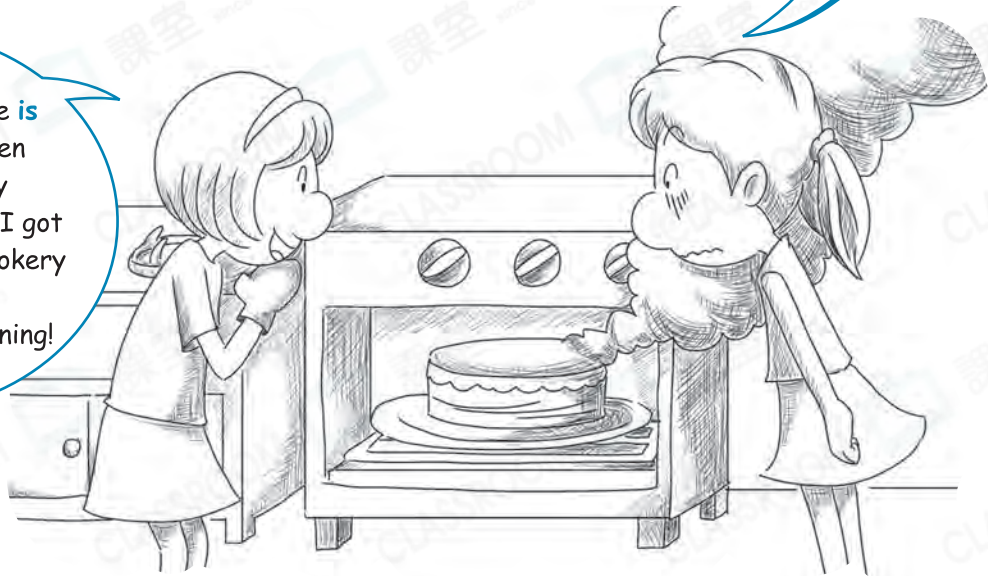


# 15

## Passive voice (II): present continuous & past continuous

Can you see it? A cake **is being baked** in the oven now! I want to give my boyfriend a surprise! I got this idea while the cookery programme **was being shown** on TV this morning!



### Usage

In Unit 14, we learnt how to form passive statements and *yes / no*-questions in the simple present and simple past tenses. In this unit, we are going to learn how to form passive statements and *yes / no*-questions in the present and past continuous tenses. In a **passive** question, the **receiver of the action is the subject** and the form of the verb is changed to '**verb to be + past participle (p.p.)**'.

|               |      |                               |                           |                                    |          |
|---------------|------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|
| Active voice  | Were | Subject: doer<br>the students | taking                    | Object: receiver<br>an exam?       | at 9 am? |
| Passive voice | Was  | Subject: receiver<br>an exam  | Verb: p.p.<br>being taken | Object: doer*<br>(by the students) | at 9 am? |

\* In the passive voice, the doer of the action can either be put after the preposition 'by' or be omitted.



### Part 1 The Present Continuous

We form passive statements, *yes / no*-questions and short answers in the present continuous tense in the following ways:

| Receiver        | Verb to be          | p.p.    |    | Doer      |      |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------|----|-----------|------|
| I               | am + (not) + being  | trained | by | the coach | now. |
| You / We / They | are + (not) + being |         |    |           |      |
| He / She / It   | is + (not) + being  |         |    |           |      |





We can change statements and *yes / no*-questions from the active voice to the passive voice in three steps:

**Example**

**STEP 1**

Swap the position of the doer and receiver. For other expressions except the verb (e.g. time and place), we usually put them at the end.

**Peter** is eating **a hotdog** **in the park.**  
(Active statement)

**A hotdog** is eating **Peter** **in the park.**

**STEP 2**

Add *by* before the doer where necessary.

A hotdog is eating **by Peter** in the park.

**STEP 3**

Change the verb to its passive form.

A hotdog **is being eaten** by Peter in the park.  
(Passive statement)

**Example**

**STEP 1**

Is **Peter** eating **a hotdog** **in the park?**  
(Active question)

Is **a hotdog** eating **Peter** **in the park?**

**STEP 2**

Is a hotdog eating **by Peter** in the park?

**STEP 3**

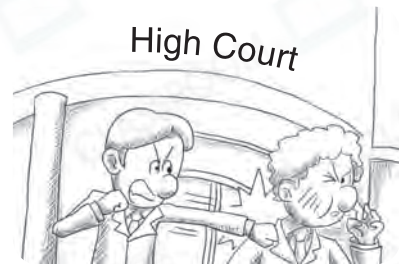
Is a hotdog **being eaten** by Peter in the park?  
(Passive question)



## Exercise 1.2

Change the following sentences from the active voice to the passive voice.

- Peter is doing the washing now. → The washing is being done by Peter now.
- Is TVC not broadcasting the drama now? → Is \_\_\_\_\_ not being broadcast by \_\_\_\_\_ now?
- Amy's father is finding a job currently. → \_\_\_\_\_ is being found by \_\_\_\_\_.
- Is Miss Chan teaching Class 1A at the moment? → Is Class 1A being taught \_\_\_\_\_ Miss Chan at the moment?
- The boy is not catching a bee in the picture.  
→ A bee \_\_\_\_\_ by the boy in the picture.
- Is someone attacking Dr Chong in front of the court?  
→ \_\_\_\_\_
- The farmer is harvesting the crops in the field at present.  
→ \_\_\_\_\_



## Part 2 The Past Continuous

We form passive statements, *yes / no*-questions and short answers in the past continuous tense in the following ways:

| Receiver          | Verb to be                  | p.p.            |    | Doer                         |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|----|------------------------------|
| I / He / She / It | <b>was + (not) + being</b>  | <b>followed</b> | by | the paparazzi the whole day. |
| You / We / They   | <b>were + (not) + being</b> |                 |    |                              |

| Receiver + Verb form |                   |                        |      | Doer      | Short answer    |                   |                 |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|------|-----------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Was</b>           | I / he / she / it | <b>being + scolded</b> | by   | the boss? | Yes,            | I / he / she / it | <b>was.</b>     |
|                      |                   |                        |      |           | No,             |                   | <b>was not.</b> |
| <b>Were</b>          | you / we / they   |                        | Yes, |           | you / we / they | <b>were.</b>      |                 |
|                      |                   |                        | No,  |           |                 | <b>were not.</b>  |                 |

Remember that in questions, we put the receiver after the helping verb *be* (e.g. *Was, Were*).

## Exercise 2.1

Change the following sentences from the active voice to the passive voice.

1. My father was washing the car this morning. → The car was being washed by my father this morning.
2. Were the kids doing the housework at that time? → Was \_\_\_\_\_ being done by \_\_\_\_\_?
3. The owner of the farm wasn't picking cherries this afternoon. → Cherries were not being picked \_\_\_\_\_ the owner of the farm this afternoon.
4. Were the students doing the test papers during the lesson? → Were the test papers \_\_\_\_\_ by the students during the lesson?
5. My sister was practising ice skating in the rink from 5 pm to 9 pm.  
→ \_\_\_\_\_
6. Was the maid mopping the floor at ten thirty last night?  
→ \_\_\_\_\_
7. My brothers were not doing the revision when the phone rang.  
→ \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 2.2

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Underline the time expression in each question.

1. The chicks are being fed by Charlie at the moment. (feed)
2. Was the bicycle \_\_\_\_\_ by your father yesterday afternoon? (repair)
3. The athlete \_\_\_\_\_ on the match by the coach right now. (not brief)
4. A: \_\_\_\_\_ the scripts \_\_\_\_\_ by the writer the whole night? (write)  
B: No, they \_\_\_\_\_.
5. A: \_\_\_\_\_ the gifts \_\_\_\_\_ by Katie for Christmas at present? (buy)  
B: Yes, \_\_\_\_\_.



## Unit Recap

Sally and her dad are talking about Hong Kong in the 1970s. Complete their conversation with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

**S:** Sally    **D:** Sally's dad

- S:** Dad, can you tell me how life was in the 1970s?
- D:** Sure. I **(1)** \_\_\_\_\_ (born) in 1964, and I went to primary school in the 1970s. Starting from 1971, all children **(2)** \_\_\_\_\_ (give) the right to receive free primary education. In 1978, the policy **(3)** \_\_\_\_\_ (extend) to Secondary 3, but I started working after I left primary school.
- S:** Oh, you started working so early! **(4)** \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ (ask) to work by your parents?
- D:** Yes, because our family was poor at that time. Nowadays many people **(5)** \_\_\_\_\_ (employ) to work in offices but I worked in a factory at that time. Many electronic goods and garments **(6)** \_\_\_\_\_ (produce) in those years by local businessmen.
- S:** So what did you do after work?
- D:** I usually watched TV with my siblings. Long TV drama series **(7)** \_\_\_\_\_ (enjoy) by many households during those days, but shorter ones **(8)** \_\_\_\_\_ (prefer) by the busy citizens now. So there **(9)** \_\_\_\_\_ (be) not many people on the street at night at that time.
- S:** That's interesting! What else was special in the 1970s?
- D:** In the past, most people bought food from wet markets. The first-ever supermarket **(10)** \_\_\_\_\_ (open) in 1970. At first, this kind of 'foreign market' **(11)** \_\_\_\_\_ (not accept) by local people, but later they began to find it convenient. Increasing popularity **(12)** \_\_\_\_\_ (gain) by these supermarkets when people became more open to new ideas.
- S:** I see! How about McDonald's? **(13)** \_\_\_\_\_ it \_\_\_\_\_ (open) in 1975?
- D:** You're right! Of course, the business of McDonald's **(14)** \_\_\_\_\_ still \_\_\_\_\_ (expand) at present.
- S:** Agree! Thanks for your interesting sharing, Dad!



### Vocabulary:

garment (n.): a piece of clothing

popularity (n.): the fact that something or someone is liked by many people