

The passive voice

The system *is being updated*.
The process *will be completed*
in five hours.



PINEAPPLE

Excuse me, *has*
my mobile phone
been fixed?



Grammar in Context

Theme: Study and work—cultural tour¹

Words by Theme



Read what the tour guide says and answer the questions.



I've been a cultural tour guide for almost twenty years. I know the city inside out. What **has been built**? Which buildings **have been pulled down**²? Let me tell you about my favourite buildings in Hong Kong.

I love the Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, which is in Sha Tin. It **was established** by a Christian from Norway in 1930. The design **was done** by a famous Danish architect. Chinese architectural³ elements **were included** in the design.

Next on the list is probably the most recognisable⁴ building of the city's skyline. The Bank of China Tower **is located** in Central. It **is known** for its distinct⁵ shape. Its triangular frameworks **are covered** by glass curtain walls. Its construction started in 1985 and **was completed** in 1989.

The building I like most isn't tall. This old building **was built** in 1922 after a temple **was demolished**⁶ in 1920 at the site. It was once a martial arts school and then a clinic. It **was painted** blue in the 1990s by the government. Thus, it **was named** Blue House.

Sadly, many historic buildings have disappeared⁷. They **have been demolished** to make way for new buildings. In fact, many existing buildings **are being redeveloped**⁸ to look 'stylish'. **Are** they really **being upgraded**? Or they **are** just **being made** similar? If that's the case, our city'll be less interesting.



1. The blue words are passive verbs. What tenses are they in paragraphs 1–2? Complete the table.

Present perfect tense	has been built	
Simple past tense		

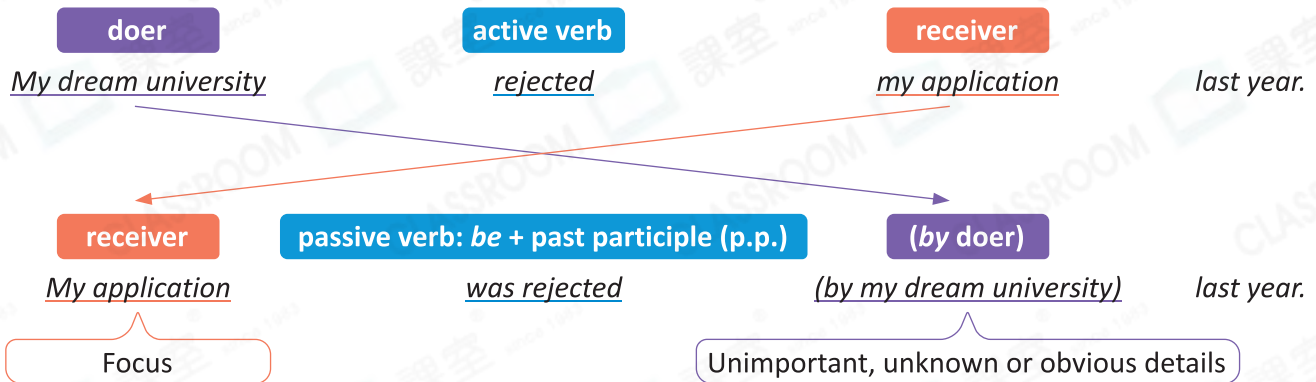
2. Read the underlined sentences. Answer the questions. Circle the correct letter for 2(iii).

- (i) What is the focus of the two sentences? _____
- (ii) Who painted Blue House blue? _____
- (iii) Who named Blue House? A. the government B. the founder of the clinic C. not given



PART 1A Formation of passive sentences

We often use the passive voice to make formal or objective statements in news reports, headlines, instructions and signs. In a passive sentence, the action receiver becomes the passive subject. We can omit the action doer when the action is more important than the doer.



PART 1B The passive in different tenses

We can form passive statements in different tenses as follows:

Tenses	Forms	Examples
Simple present	<i>is / am / are</i> + (not) + past participle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>We clean the kitchen once a week.</i> → <i>The kitchen is cleaned (by us) once a week.</i> ▪ <i>The parents don't discipline the naughty children.</i> → <i>The naughty children aren't disciplined (by the parents).</i>
Present continuous	<i>is / am / are</i> + (not) + <i>being</i> + past participle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>They are watering the plants now.</i> → <i>The plants are being watered (by them) now.</i> ▪ <i>The cleaner isn't vacuuming the office currently.</i> → <i>The office isn't being vacuumed (by the cleaner) currently.</i>
Present perfect	<i>has / have</i> + (not) + <i>been</i> + past participle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The teacher has taught these chapters.</i> → <i>These chapters have been taught (by the teacher).</i> ▪ <i>I haven't emptied the rubbish bin for days.</i> → <i>The rubbish bin hasn't been emptied (by me) for days.</i>
Simple past	<i>was / were</i> + (not) + past participle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Someone ate my muffin last night.</i> → <i>My muffin was eaten (by someone) last night.</i> ▪ <i>The company didn't invite interns to the annual dinner.</i> → <i>Interns weren't invited (by the company) to the annual dinner.</i>
Past continuous	<i>was / were</i> + (not) + <i>being</i> + past participle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>He was delivering the parcels at 5 pm.</i> → <i>The parcels were being delivered (by him) at 5 pm.</i> ▪ <i>The station wasn't broadcasting the show at noon.</i> → <i>The show wasn't being broadcast (by the station) at noon.</i>
Simple future	<i>will</i> + (not) + <i>be</i> + past participle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The courier will collect the document soon.</i> → <i>The document will be collected (by the courier) soon.</i> ▪ <i>The school won't release the results tomorrow.</i> → <i>The results won't be released (by the school) tomorrow.</i>



Exercise 1.1

Rewrite the sentences in the passive voice. Do not keep the action doers.

1. The class monitor feeds the class pet every day.	The class pet is fed every day.
2. Mr Ho is painting the room at the moment.	_____
3. I don't allow my cats in bed with me.	_____
4. Some restaurants will take meat off the menu.	_____
5. I didn't spend my money on video games.	_____
6. The mechanics were repairing my car then.	_____
7. The idol has just posted a series of selfies on his Instagram.	_____



Error Diagnosis

When an active sentence is rewritten in the passive voice, the object (action receiver) becomes the passive subject. Check if the verb agrees with the passive subject (action receiver).

singular subject + singular verb

plural subject + plural verb

Harry has eaten the pancakes. → **The pancakes have been eaten** by Harry.

Our teachers are sharing the information online now. →

The information are being shared (by our teachers) online now. **X**

The information is being shared (by our teachers) online now. **✓**

He has eaten eight hamburgers already. →

Eight hamburgers has been eaten (by him) already. **X**

Eight hamburgers have been eaten (by him) already. **✓**



Exercise 1.2

Write the sentences in the passive voice with the help of the given words.



1. graffiti / scrawl / on the wall / last night	Graffiti was scrawled on the wall last night.
2. this movie / watch / many times / recently	_____
3. the shelves / fill / right now	_____
4. what music / play / in the film's fight scene	_____
5. the breaking news / publish / shortly	_____
6. our applications / usually / send / online	_____





Exercise 1.3

There are some mistakes in the encyclopaedia entry. Correct the underlined mistakes and write the correct verbs in the spaces provided.


Article [Talk](#) Read [Edit](#) Search CRpaedia

The New Wisdom Bookshop

From CRpaedia, the powerful encyclopaedia

The original [Wisdom Bookshop](#)

(1) is found by Dr Johnson in 1952. Two years ago, his son, Ian, took over the business. Ian has relocated and redesigned the shop. The new shop (2) locates in Wan Chai. It is going to open next month. To give the shop a new image, the famous designer Calvin Tse (3) is hired to create a new logo last year. 'For years, [Wisdom Bookshop](#) (4) has regard as a traditional bookshop. The new [Wisdom Bookshop](#) will target teenagers,' said Ian. 'New titles by young authors (5) have been added to our collection later this year.' Unlike the original shop, stationery (6) is not sold in the new one. Yet, magazines and newspapers will still be available. [Wisdom Bookshop's](#) website (7) is rebuilding now. At the moment, coupons (8) are given away on its several social media sites.



Wisdom Bookshop

Contents

1. [Brief history](#)
- 1.1 [Chronology](#)

1. _____ was founded
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

PART 2A Yes / No questions in the passive voice

We can form yes / no questions in the passive voice in different tenses as follows:

Tenses	Forms				Examples
Simple present	<i>Is/Am/Are</i>	+ subject +	—	+ p.p.?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Is the meeting room occupied?</i> ▪ <i>Am I invited to the party?</i>
Present continuous	<i>Is/Am/Are</i>		<i>being</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Is the cake being baked?</i> ▪ <i>Are the walls being painted now?</i>
Present perfect	<i>Has/Have</i>		<i>been</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Has the letter been sent?</i> ▪ <i>Have the files been uploaded yet?</i>
Simple past	<i>Was/Were</i>		—		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Was the fish caught by you?</i> ▪ <i>Were these books published last year?</i>
Past continuous	<i>Was/Were</i>		<i>being</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Was the child being nagged all day long?</i> ▪ <i>Were the photos being printed at that time?</i>
Simple future	<i>Will</i>		<i>be</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Will the film be shown next month?</i> ▪ <i>Will the sandwiches be made soon?</i>

PART 2B Wh-questions in the passive voice

We can form *wh*-questions in the passive voice in different tenses as follows:

Questions		Answers
Wh-word	be + past participle + ?	
What	is drawn on the wall?	A star is drawn on the wall.
Who	is being taken to hospital?	Mia is being taken to hospital.
Which film	has been played?	Toy Story 3 has been played.
When	was the new model launched?	It was launched last year.
Where	were the clothes being sent to?	They were being sent to Africa.
Why	will the shop be closed?	Because it will be under renovation.
How	will the animation be made?	The creator will use a software.



Exercise 2.1

Complete or write the questions.

- Q: Are the correct details collected (collect)? A: Yes, they are.
- Q: Which song _____ (play) to end the event? A: The last song is 'Young Dumb & Broke'.
- Q: _____ the child _____ (leave) alone for days? A: Yes, he has.
- Q: _____ the accident widely _____ (report)? A: No, it wasn't.
- Q: Why _____ Tim _____ (scold) by his mum now? A: Because he has failed in all his tests.
- Q: _____ ? A: Yes, your socks have been mended.
- Q: _____ ? A: Professor Ma has been contacted to
_____ ? be the guest speaker.
- Q: _____ ? A: No, the tea isn't being prepared at
_____ ? the moment.
- Q: _____ ? A: Just a little sugar will be needed.
- Q: _____ ? A: We won't be allowed to leave until
_____ ? we've finished all the homework.



Exercise 2.2

Anson is being interviewed for a part-time job. Complete the conversation with the correct form of the given verbs.

Ms Lee: (1) Have you ever worked (work) in an advertising agency?

Anson: No, but when I was helping with website update in my uncle's design studio last summer, I learnt how to make a digital voice that (2) _____ (resemble) my own voice.

Ms Lee: I see. (3) _____ you _____ (train) for movie editing when you were helping there?

Anson: Yes. My uncle (4) _____ (have) some professional video editing tools.

Ms Lee: (5) _____ software _____ (use) most often?

Anson: Final Cut Pro.

Ms Lee: Great, we use the same software. In the coming months, we are going to launch an outdoor marketing campaign.

Anson: (6) _____ the campaign _____ (hold) exactly?

Ms Lee: Water World Ocean Park. Our team (7) _____ (stay) at the hotel next to the park during the campaign.

Anson: (8) _____ part-time staff _____ (include)?

Ms Lee: Let me think ... Yes. We need part-time workers to assist the campaign managers.

Anson: I would like to know more about the job duties of the part-time workers ...



Error Diagnosis

Some verbs cannot be used in the passive voice.

Situations	Examples
Intransitive verbs (verbs that do not take objects) e.g. <i>appear, arrive, come, go, die, happen, sleep, stay</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The cat was died in the snow. X ▪ The guests were arrived on time. X ▪ We have been gone to the market. X <p>! Gone is not used as a verb in the passive voice in the sentences below. It is an adjective meaning <i>nothing left or dead</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ My money was <u>gone</u>. ✓ ▪ The patient was <u>gone</u>. ✓
Verbs that describe states instead of actions e.g. <i>become, belong, look (like), fit, have (=own), resemble, suit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The chairs <i>became</i> old. (X <i>were become</i>) ▪ Does this chair <i>belong</i> here? (X <i>Is ... belonged</i>) ▪ These TV shows <i>suit</i> all tastes. (X <i>are suited</i>)

Reminder

Some verbs are almost always used in the passive voice.

Situations	Examples
Verbs that are used with unimportant or obvious subjects e.g. <i>bear, raise, ship, hospitalise</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ He <i>was born and raised</i> in Tokyo. ▪ Your order <i>will be shipped</i> in no time. ▪ The victims <i>were hospitalised</i> immediately.

Grammar Wrap-up

Jacqueline is writing to her friend about her experience of being an apprentice. Complete the letter using the correct form of the given verbs. The answers can be in the active or passive voice.

Dear Candice,

(1) _____ Have _____ any of your internship applications _____ been accepted _____ (accept)? I've just started my first week as an apprentice at a traditional Chinese medicine clinic. The experience has been challenging, but it (2) _____ (live) up to my expectations.

The clinic (3) _____ (open) 80 years ago by the great-grandfather of the current owner. It (4) _____ (locate) in Kowloon City. The clinic (5) _____ (look) like a shop from a black-and-white film. Most of the old decorations (6) _____ (preserve), though parts of the wooden apothecary cabinet (7) _____ (destroy) by fire in 1955. The damaged parts (8) _____ (restore) recently.

The clinic has been reputable in the neighbourhood for years.

Therefore, the owner is very strict about my performance. I

(9) _____ (arrive) at the clinic before 6 am to update the inventory list for medicinal plants. On the first day of work, the owner (10) _____ (teach) me the basics. He (11) _____ (ask) me questions. For example, *How (12) _____ this herbal soup _____ (prepare)?* When I (13) _____ (not know) the answer, he explained in great detail. At first, I didn't understand what I (14) _____ (tell). However, I've already learnt a lot in just one week.

I heard that you dropped your phone in the bath. (15) _____ it _____ (fix) at the moment? I hope all the data (16) _____ (recover) soon. Write back to me.

Best,

Jacqueline



More to take away

apprentice (n.) = someone who works for a skilled person to learn the skills needed in their job

apothecary (n.) = someone who prepared and sold medicines in the past

Grammar in Pre-DSE Text Type

Theme: Study and work—career path

You are writing a report for a school project. Complete the report using the correct form of the given verbs. The answers can be in the active or passive voice.

appear apply base collect choose ~~conduct~~
 need regard replace substitute value view

Words by
Theme



Report on Career Choices¹ of Students

Introduction

The study (1) _____ was conducted _____ last year to find out our students' career preferences². 450 questionnaires (2) _____ between March and April 20XX.

Findings

About 75 per cent of the respondents are interested in technology-related professions³. Application development (3) _____ by the highest number of students. It (4) _____ as 'interesting' and 'exciting'. The majority of students believe that mobile app developers (5) _____ as one of the most important professions in the coming ten years. Only seven per cent of the students would like to take customer service⁴ jobs. Many companies rely on artificial intelligence to answer FAQs and customer support questions. Today, more and more such positions (6) _____ with chatbots. Over 80 per cent of the students would like to work from home. However, 12 per cent of the students think home office (7) _____ never _____ for traditional office. Surprisingly, eight per cent of the students prefer not to work with computers. Offline jobs (8) _____ to be more attractive to these students.

Recommendations⁵

The following recommendations (9) _____ on the above findings:

- While most students would like to join the technology industry, offline skills (10) _____ equally in the future. They should develop a broad set of skills⁶, especially creativity⁷, critical thinking⁸ and collaboration⁹.
- Flexibility¹⁰ (11) _____ always _____ in the workplace. Competent¹¹ employees should be able to work both independently¹² and with a team. They are also open-minded¹³, innovative¹⁴ and willing to take on challenges¹⁵.
- In a job interview, be prepared to answer this question: 'How (12) _____ you _____ your skills to this position?'

When the doers of the actions are unknown, obvious or unimportant, they are usually not mentioned.

2

- The sandwiches **have been eaten**. (unknown doer)
- Our headquarters **will be located** in the city centre. (obvious doer)
- Funding **was given** to the non-profit organisation. (unimportant doer)

Version 1

Lennon is drafting a flyer for a university. Read the flyer and pay attention to the underlined parts.



Urban University

About us

Urban University is a prestigious university. We are proud of our excellent teaching and outstanding academic achievements. **(1)** Prime Education Magazine described our university as 'the top academy for technology studies in Asia' in 20XX.

We are well known for our innovative teaching methods. **(2)** We have adopted creative approaches since the founding of Urban University. **(3)** Our university consists of 12 academic departments, from information technology to computer animation.

Eligibility

(7) We will base assessment of local applicants on their HKDSE examination results while **(8)** relevant departments will consider other factors.

Degree in electronic engineering

(4) The university designed the programme Bachelor of Science in Electronic Engineering to provide students with discipline-specific knowledge and technical skills in the field. Technology is also a key aspect of the department. **(5)** At the moment, the department research team is creating various smart teaching devices. **(6)** We will install the new devices in the next academic year to further improve our teaching.

More inspiring teaching gadgets are coming in the near future too.

Version 2

Rewrite the underlined parts in Version 1 in the passive voice based on the instructions.



Urban University

About us

Urban University is a prestigious university. We are proud of our excellent teaching and outstanding academic achievements. **(1)** Our university was described as 'the top academy for technology studies in Asia' by *Prime Education Magazine* in 20XX (keep the action doer).

We are well known for our innovative teaching methods.

(2) _____
 _____ (omit the action doer).

(3) _____

 _____ (use *compose of*).

Eligibility

(7) _____
 _____ (omit the action doer) while

(8) _____
 _____ (keep the action doer).

Degree in electronic engineering

(4) _____

(omit the action doer). Technology is also a key aspect of the department.

(5) _____

(keep the action doer). **(6)** _____

_____ (omit the action doer).
 More inspiring teaching gadgets are coming in the near future too.



Brain Breaks

Which *nation* is most hated?

Answer: exami-nation

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CLASSROOM



CLASSROOM 課堂 知識而有 學以致用

