

PASSIVE VOICE

The passive voice is less usual than the active voice. The active voice is the "normal" voice. But sometimes we need the passive voice, especially in English, where the passive voice is used much more than in Spanish.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE PASSIVE VOICE

The structure of the **passive voice** is very simple:

subject + auxiliary verb (be) + main verb (past participle) + complement.

Peter + was + employed + by this company.

The main verb is **always** in its **past participle** form.

Look at these examples:

| Subject | auxiliary verb (to be) | | main verb (past participle) | |
|------------|------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Water | Is | | drunk | by everyone. |
| 100 people | Are | | employed | by this company. |
| I | Am | | paid | in euro. |
| We | Are | not | Paid | in dollars. |
| Are | They | | paid | in yen? |

THE USE OF BY

Note that we always use **by** to introduce the **passive object** (Fish are eaten **by** cats).

Look at this sentence:

- He was killed **with** a gun.

Normally we use **by** to introduce the passive object. But the gun is not the active subject. The gun did not kill him. He was killed **by** somebody **with** a gun. In the active voice, it would be: Somebody killed him **with** a gun. The gun is the instrument. Somebody is the "agent" or "doer".

CONJUGATION FOR THE PASSIVE VOICE

We can form the passive in any tense. In fact, conjugation of verbs in the passive tense is rather easy, as the main verb is always in past participle form and the auxiliary verb is always **be**. To form the required tense, we conjugate the auxiliary verb. So, for example:

- present simple: It **is** made
- present continuous: It **is being** made
- past simple: It **was made**

Here are some examples with most of the possible tenses:

| | | |
|------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Infinitive | | to be washed |
| Simple | present | It is washed. |
| | Past | It was washed. |
| | Future | It will be washed. |

USE OF THE PASSIVE VOICE

We use the passive when:

- we want to make the **active object** more important

Ex. **President Kennedy was killed by Lee H. Oswald.**

- we do not know the **active subject**

Ex. **My wallet was stolen.**