

86 Passive reporting verbs

1 Using passive reporting verbs

We can use passive reporting verbs

- to talk about general feelings or beliefs:
His company is thought to be worth almost three billion dollars. (= Many people think this.)
- when we don't know (or we don't want to say) who made the statement originally:
It was suggested that the factory should be closed.
I'm afraid your fees were considered to be too expensive.

2 Patterns with passive reporting verbs

We usually use the reporting verbs *believe*, *consider*, *expect*, *know*, *report*, *understand*, *say*, *state* and *think*. There are two patterns.

- *It* + passive verb + *that* clause:
It is said that Ralph Lauren is the world's richest fashion designer.
Yesterday it was reported that three prisoners had escaped from the island.
- Subject + passive reporting verb + *to* + infinitive:
The American team is expected to win. (= Most people expect them to win.)
His company is thought to be worth almost three billion dollars.

To talk about the past, we use the perfect infinitive (► Unit 65.2); there is an active and a passive form:

People say the Romans built the town. → *The Romans are said to have built the town.*
People believe the town was built by the Romans. → *The town is believed to have been built by the Romans.*

FORMALITY CHECK These patterns are used mainly in news reports and in academic and scientific English:

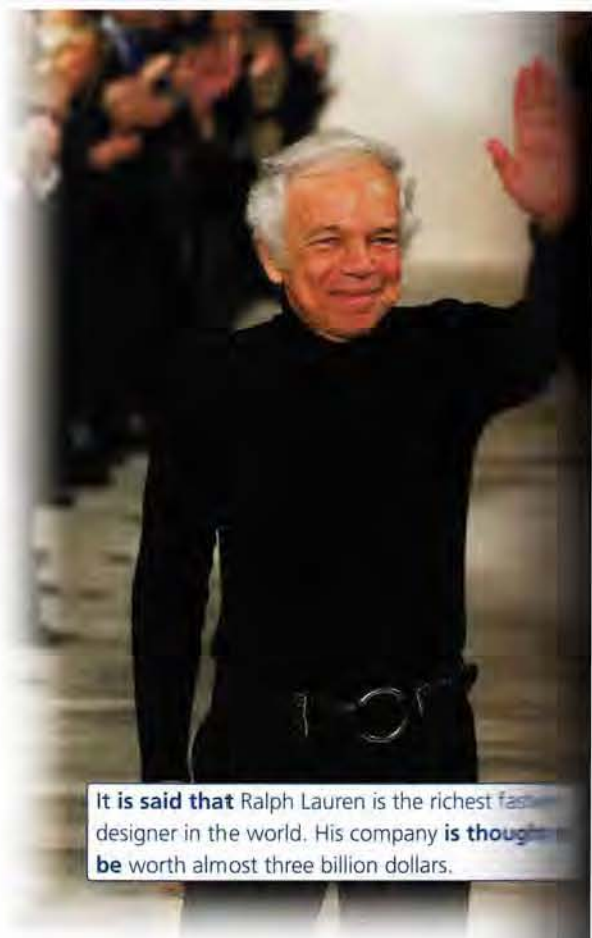
These poems are considered to be Shakespeare's finest works.
The new software is expected to require more memory.

3 *supposed to*, *meant to*

Supposed to and *meant to* have several meanings

- We often use them for something that was arranged or expected but didn't happen:
He was supposed to phone me yesterday. (= I expected him to phone but he didn't.)
Where are the keys? They were supposed to have been left on my desk.
Where's John? He was meant to be here half an hour ago!
- We also use *supposed to/meant to* for things we should or shouldn't do. We often use it when people 'break the rules' or do things we think are wrong:
You can't go in there. You're meant to wait outside.
Shh! We aren't supposed to talk in the library.
- But *supposed to/meant to* can also describe a general belief:
Try their lamb curry. It's supposed to be really good.
You should take the train; it's meant to be less stressful than flying.

More on reporting verbs and patterns ► Module 13



It is said that Ralph Lauren is the richest fashion designer in the world. His company **is thought to be** worth almost three billion dollars.