

3 Quality

Passive structures: affirmatives

1 Look at the active sentence given first and then write the passive version below.

- The Board usually takes strategic decisions.
Strategic decisions _____ by the Board.
- They announced the date for the talks yesterday.
The date for the talks _____ yesterday.
- A health and safety officer will visit the factory next week.
Next week the factory _____ by a health and safety officer.
- They are going to completely redesign the product.
The product _____.
- They are still considering the matter.
The matter _____.
- The garage was servicing my car last week.
My car _____ last week.
- The design engineer has finalized the plans.
The plans _____ by the design engineer.
- There was no point having the meeting – they had already agreed all the details.
There was no point having the meeting – all the details _____.

When you have checked your answers, read the information in the box below.

- In examples 1–8 you formed the passive for each of the most common verb tenses. Notice the similarities: you used *be* + past participle in every case. Also notice how the form of *be* is the same as the tense in the active version.
- Is the person who does the action (the agent) mentioned in the passive version? Look back. The answer is 'yes' for sentences 1, 3 and 7. In the case of 1 and 3, the agent is necessary in the passive version – otherwise the meaning is not complete. In 7, the agent is not necessary – it could be left out if it is clear from the context (or not important) who finalized the plans.
- There were adverbs in sentences 1 (*usually*), 4 (*completely*), 5 (*still*) and 8 (*already*). Did you put them in the correct place?

2 Rewrite these active sentences in the passive, making the words in bold into the subject. Leave out the agent if it is not necessary.

- We do **dozens of quality checks** every day.
Dozens of quality checks are done every day.
- Thousands of people use **our products**.

- The secretary's just found **that file you were looking for**.

- Last month the bank gave **us** more credit.

- We will pay **all senior managers** a bonus at the end of the year.

- They are never going to do **that**.

7 Highly-trained inspectors do **our quality checks**.

8 We are dealing with **the issue**.

3 Match each example of the passive 1–5 with the best description of its use a–e below.

- First the beans are separated from the shells and then they are roasted over a low heat for two hours.
 - Don't worry, the conference room was cleaned this morning.
 - Keys and mobile phones must be placed on the trays provided.
 - Yes, I can see that a small mistake was made on the invoice. I'll correct it and send out a new one.
 - It was agreed that Inge should set up a working party to investigate the matter further.
- a) it is obvious or not important to say who did the action
b) avoiding mentioning a name in order to make the statement less personal
c) reporting formally (a decision, what someone said in a meeting, etc.)
d) describing a process
e) official announcements (often written)

4 Notice in Exercise 3 sentence 5c above that we often use *It* + passive to report things formally. Complete the sentences below with the words from the box. Several answers may be possible, but one solution uses all the words in the most appropriate way.

agreed announced believed
estimated reported said

- It was _____ at the press conference that the CEO had resigned.
- After some discussion it was _____ that Jim should be team leader for the forthcoming negotiations.
- It is _____ that 'diamonds are a girl's best friend'. But I don't believe it. I think that chocolate is a girl's best friend.
- It was _____ in yesterday's newspapers that the economy grew by 4% last year.
- It has been _____ that fish stocks in the North Atlantic will decline to zero by the year 2050.
- It is _____ that a gang of four armed men carried out the attack, but police are still unsure of the exact numbers.

Passive structures: negatives

5 Complete the second sentence so that it has the same meaning as the first. Use contractions (*n't* instead of *not*, etc.) where possible.

- No one has serviced the machine since April.
The machine hasn't been serviced since April.
- They aren't going to pay us until June.
We _____ until June.
- The staff had been poorly trained.
The staff _____ very well.