

The Passive Perspective

Increasing your proficiency in English

Structure

Active vs Passive

What is the difference?

When

How to avoid speaking
Spanglish

How

How to construct the passive

The passive + modals

Mixing the passive voice with
modal verbs

Complicated Structures

Verbs with 2 objects

Vocabulary

Emotions and Feelings

A large, dark blue double quote symbol.

**“There are 3 kinds of people:
Those who make things happen
Those who watch things happen
and those who ask –
What happened?”**

An **active** sentence:

- I **drank** two cups of coffee.
- People **speak** English and Spanish in the US.
- They **have turned off** the lights.

A **passive** sentence:

- Two cups of coffee **were drunk**
- English and Spanish **are spoken** in the US.
- The lights **have been turned off**.

Active or

Passive

The passive voice is used in the following situations:

1. When the subject is **unknown, unimportant** or **obvious** from the context.
2. When the **action** is more important than the **subject**.
3. To make the sentence **more indirect** (and **more polite** as a result)

The Passive

When?

The Passive

How to use it correctly.

We make the passive voice by putting the verb “to be” into the correct tense and then we add the past participle.

Active

They **baked** a chocolate cake.

He **bakes** a chocolate cake every week.

Passive

A chocolate cake **was baked**.

A chocolate cake **is baked** every week.

That's right! We can use the passive voice with every verb tense and form.

So what is going on?

(with the passive voice, not the chocolate cake...)



The passive voice



How – the present

Here is a general overview of the **present** verb tenses in the passive voice

Active

They **speak** French in the meeting.

She **is planting** a tree.

Passive

French **is spoken** in the meeting.

A tree **is being planted**.

The passive voice is much more common in English than in Spanish

The passive

How – the past

Here is a general overview of the **past** verb tenses in the passive voice

Active

Someone **stole** the painting.

They **were preparing** the food.

Passive

The painting **was stolen**.

A tortilla **was being prepared**.

Here is a general overview of the **perfect** verb tenses in the passive voice

Active

They **have cleaned** the roads this week.

She **had finished** the report early.

Passive

The roads **have been cleaned...**

The report **had been finished...**

The Passive

How – the perfect



Here is a general overview of the **future** verb tenses in the passive voice

Active

We **will take** the horses to the stable.

They **will sign** the contract tomorrow.

Passive

The horses **will be taken** to the stable.

The contract **will be signed**.

Notice that the future continuous is never used in the passive

The Passive

How – the future

The Passive + Modals



As the passive voice can be used with any verb tense, that also includes the modal verbs. The rules are the same as with the other verb tenses.

Active

You **should wash** your wool sweater by hand.

They **might give** the Oscar to Tom Hanks.

Passive

Wool sweaters **should be washed** by hand.

The Oscar **might be given** to Tom Hanks.

The passive + modals

Active

We **must look into** that question.

Nobody **can beat** Spain at football.

They **would need to arrest** the politician.

Passive

That question **must be looked** into.

Spain **can't be beaten** at football.

The politician **would need to be arrested**.



Important differences

“to be born” is a verb that causes some problems for Spanish speakers because in English it is in the passive.

We cannot say “~~I~~ borned in Spain”

Eg:

Where were you born?

I **was born** in Spain (by my mother)



Verbs with 2 objects

Some verbs that have 2 objects can have 2 different passive sentences.

Give:

He **gave** the book to me

The book **was given** to me

I **was given** the book

Passive Voice:

Verbs with 2 objects

Active

She **showed** her relatives her new house.

The guide **will show** us the science museum.

Passive

Her relatives **were shown** the new house.

The new house **was shown** to the relatives.

We **will be shown** the science museum.

The science museum **will be shown** to us.

Remember that it is always possible to use the original subject “by...”

Passive Voice

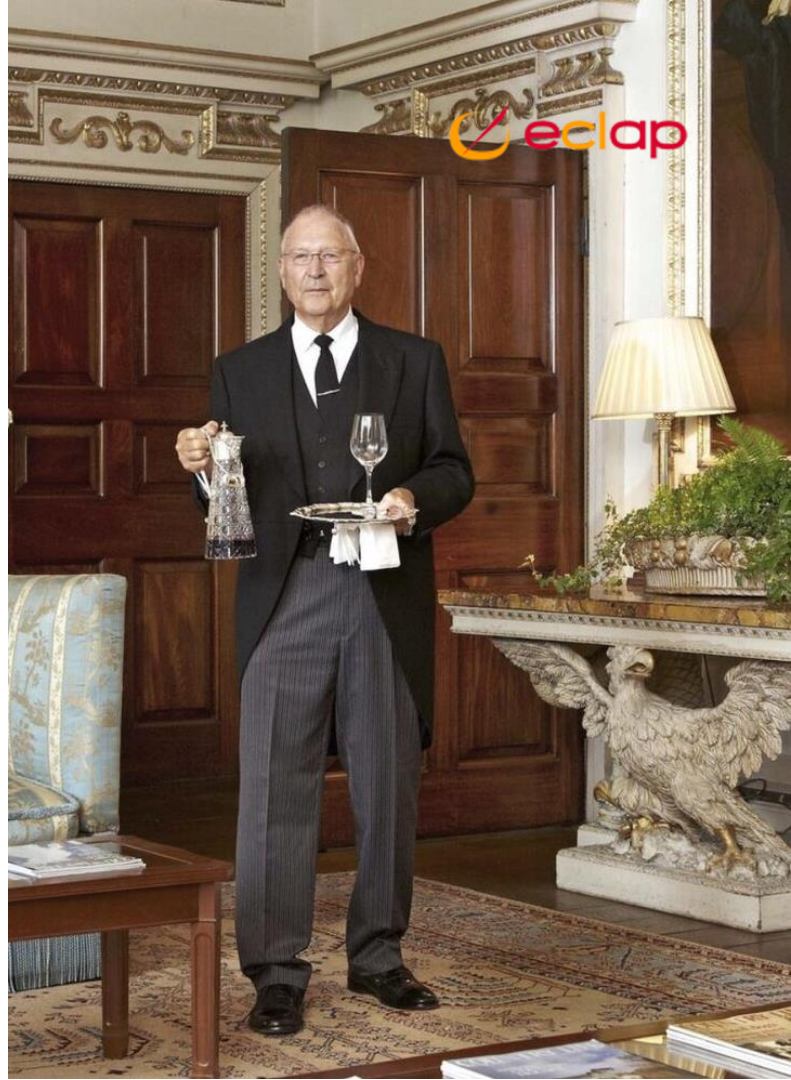
Common Errors

Spanish students often misunderstand the passive voice and mistakenly believe the reflexive (in Spanish) = the passive (in English)

Obviously this wrong.

E.g.

Me despierto, me ducho, me visto, ...



Passive Voice



Translations

PHRASE	SIGNIFICADO
The Mona Lisa has been stolen twice, It's being made.	La Mona Lisa ha sido robada dos veces. Se está fabricando.
The best ham is made in Jabugo. In the US, lunch is eaten at twelve.	El mejor jamón se hace en Jabugo. En EEUU se come a las doce.
All of the beer was drunk. The meeting is going to be cancelled.	Se bebieron toda la cerveza. La reunión se va a cancelar.
How many times has the moon been visited? Where is the best blood sausage made?	¿Cuántas veces se ha visitado la luna? ¿Dónde se hace la mejor morcilla?

Emotions & Feelings



Vocabulary, Phrasal Verbs & Idioms



Feelings

Are you on cloud nine?

Or maybe you're feeling fed up or chilled out?



Feelings Vocabulary



Frantic

Agitated, nervous

E.g. She was frantic when she realised she had an exam tomorrow.



Feelings Vocabulary



To vent

To release anger, frustration

E.g. Most people feel like venting helps them with their anger.

Unbearable

Something that is impossible to endure.

E.g. The loud music coming from the neighbours stereo at 7 am was unbearable.



Feelings Vocabulary



Exhilarating

Exciting, invigorating

E.g. Most people think that travelling is exhilarating

A buzz

A feeling that is similar to excitement. Also used for alcohol

E.g. The artist loves the buzz that she gets from performing in front of a live audience

Feelings Vocabulary



Tantalising

tempting

E.g. Brian thought the freshly baked chocolate cake smelled tantalising

Daunting

Intimidating

E.g. Giving a presentation in English can be quite daunting.

Feelings Phrasal Verbs



Wind (someone) up

To make someone angry



Crack up

To laugh or make someone laugh



Lash out at someone

To verbally attack someone



Feelings Phrasal Verbs



Choke up

To become emotional, sad



Let down

To disappoint



Freak out

To go crazy or get scared



Idiomatic Expressions

Feelings

1. **Level with someone:** To speak honestly to someone.
2. **Drive someone mad:** When you make someone very angry.
3. **Blow out of proportion:** To overreact to or overstate a situation.
4. **Blow a fuse:** When you lose your temper
5. **Have the last laugh:** To succeed when others thought you would not.

Idiomatic Expressions

- A. They were disappointed but they put a brave face on it.
- B. He was at a loss for words when she told him she loved him
- C. It's essential to give people the benefit of the doubt.
- D. She felt like a fish out of water at the convention.
- E. You said you were ready but you lost your nerve at the last minute!

Thanks!

Does anyone have any questions?