

Kessia M Lima



Activating the passive voice

GRAMMAR

ACTIVE VERSUS PASSIVE

- 1** Look at the picture. When do you think it was taken? What do you think life was like for these people compared to the way young people live now?

Maybe the picture is in the 1960s. They probably had more fun than young people now.

- 2 A** Read the paragraph and choose the best title.

- 1 The best time to live
- 2 How the young found their voice
- 3 New generations, new names

After World War II, a generation was born that has come to be known as Baby Boomers. They are thought to be healthier, wealthier and more optimistic than any previous generation. They were followed by Generation X, a name that was invented by photographer Robert Capa. Generation X includes people born between the mid-60s and the early 80s. This generation is sometimes called the MTV Generation, as it supposedly grew up watching music videos. Generation X is known for entrepreneurship and open-mindedness in regard to race, gender, class, and religion. Following Generation X is Generation Y or 'Millennials', who were born between the early 1980s and 2000. They are known for being confident, informal, and desperate to share their lives with others via social networking. They arrived at a time of great technological change and are perhaps the first generation that is being educated for jobs that may not exist at the moment.

- B** Read the extracts from the text and do questions 1–3.

- a) They are thought to be healthier ... than any previous generation.
- b) This generation ... grew up watching music videos.
- c) [This] generation has come to be known as Baby Boomers.
- d) They arrived at a time of great technological change.
- e) The first generation that is being educated ...

- 1 Underline the verbs in each sentence.
- 2 Three of the sentences don't say who 'did' the action (because we don't know or it's not important). Which three?
- 3 Which sentences use active verbs? Which use the passive?

- C** Look at the sentences again. Complete the rule.

RULES

We form the passive with: subject + the verb _____ (in the present, past or other tense) + past participle.



- 3 A** Rewrite the sentences below using the passive.

- 1 Douglas Coupland made the name Generation X famous through his novel, *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*.

The name Generation X was made famous by Coupland's novel.

- 2 Sometimes the media invents names for different generations.
- 3 Newsweek magazine used the term Generation 9/11 in 2001.
- 4 Someone gave the people growing up after the war the name 'Baby Boomers'.
- 5 In the future, people will know today's babies as Generation Z.
- 6 William Strauss and Neil Howe wrote a book about Millennials (*Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*).
- 7 Sometimes people call the generation born from 1910 to 1920 'The Greatest Generation'.
- 8 Older people have always criticised younger people for their bad behaviour!

- B** **9.3** **WEAK FORMS:** *are, has been, was and were*
Listen and check your answers.

- C** Listen again and notice the pronunciation of *are* /ə/, *has been* /həz bɪn/, *was* /wəz/ and *were* /wə/. Then listen and repeat.

- D** Discuss with other students. What do you think of the idea of different generations? Are there real differences between them? Give examples.

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PASSIVE AND ACTIVE VOICE transformations

1. Gerry has fed the cat this morning.

The cat

2. They always announce the result of the exam in June.

The result...

3. Students don't speak English in class.

English...

4. My wallet was taken by a thief.

A thief...

5. Thomas Edison didn't invent the light bulb in 1867.

The light bulb...

6. The bedrooms have been cleaned by the maid.

The maid...

7. The boys offered the girls some help.

* The girl...

* Some...

8. Helen is not making us dinner tonight.

* Dinner...


* We...

9. A hail storm destroyed many homes last week.

Many homes...

10. Notebooks are going to be bought for the school.



We...



PASSIVE VOICE

CONVERT THE SENTENCES FROM ACTIVE INTO PASSIVE VOICE:

- 1) Grandfather is going to tell the children a story.
- 2) People make jam from fruit.
- 3) They will open the new sports centre soon.
- 4) Andrew hasn't cut the grass yet.
- 5) Her mother woke Alice up at seven o'clock.
- 6) The boys walk the dog every day.
- 7) Sue asked the waiter to bring some water.
- 8) Her parents may not believe her excuse.
- 9) An expert has valued the painting.
- 10) The hotel provides hot water 24 hours a day.
- 11) A boy delivers our newspaper every morning.
- 12) Several important art critics attended the meeting.
- 13) A designer in Paris will make her wedding dress.
- 14) He likes when people give him presents.
- 15) The company has published an interesting book.
- 16) They invited us to a concert last Sunday.
- 17) People gather mushrooms in autumn.



1a Read sentences 1–9 about the quiz. Which verbs in bold are active (A) and which are passive (P)?

- 1 Daniel **was chosen** to play Harry Potter when he was 11.
- 2 The author, JK Rowling, **chose** Daniel herself.
- 3 This famous actor **changed** his name to Fong Si-Lung in the late nineties.
- 4 However, he **is** better **known** as Jackie Chan.
- 5 Jackie Chan **has appeared** in more than 100 films.
- 6 More than 400 films of Shakespeare's plays **have been made**.
- 7 *Avatar* **was directed** by James Cameron.
- 8 A sequel **is being filmed** at the moment.
- 9 A third film **will be made** next year.

Cutting Edge 3rd edition (2016)

b Complete with the past simple, past continuous, or past perfect.

The marathon runner was sweating when she crossed the finish line. (sweat, cross)

1 The accident _____ when they _____ home.
(happen, drive)

English File – 3rd edition

Titanic

A Legend in the Making

On April 10th 1912 the Titanic^{a)}
(set off) on its journey from Southampton to
New York. Over 2,200 passengers and crew
^{b)} (travel) aboard.

The first four days on board^{c)}
(go) without incidents. Shortly before midnight
on April 14th the passengers^{d)}
(enjoy) another pleasant night aboard the ship
and many^{e)} (already/sleep).

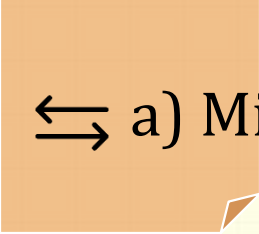
Earlier that day the captain, Edward Smith,
^{f)} (receive) five warnings about
icebergs. However, the crew^{g)}
(not see) any, so he^{h)} (decide)
not to slow the ship down. Then at 11:40
p.m., the ship's lookoutⁱ⁾
(see) an iceberg ahead. However, the Titanic
^{j)} (move) too fast and it
was too late to turn the ship away from the
iceberg. The Titanic^{k)} (strike)
the enormous mass of ice with its side and
^{l)} (begin) to sink.

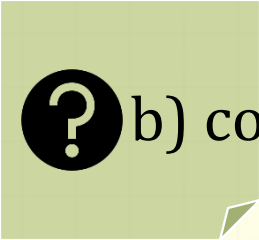


By 12.10 a.m. the evacuation^{m)}
(already/begin). There was panic and confusion
because the lifeboats couldn't carry all the
passengers aboard. Finally, at 2.20 a.m., while
the last lifeboatⁿ⁾ (sail) away,
the Titanic^{o)} (break) in two
and^{p)} (sink) to the bottom of
the North Atlantic. Tragically, over 1,500 men,
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Aims

 \Leftrightarrow a) Misleading transformation activities

 b) complexities of teaching (and learning) the passive

 c) Teaching suggestions

Form

Subject + auxiliary be + past participle of the verb
(by-phrase)



Spotlight 1

Using the present simple passive to describe
a process

When you write about a process, one of the main tenses you need is the **present simple passive**. You make it with: ~~object + auxiliary verb + past participle of the verb~~

Example: *The tea leaves **are put** into boxes, then the boxes **are delivered** to supermarkets.*

- a. Simple present: I am invited to the party.
- b. Present progressive: I am being invited to the party.
- c. Present perfect: I have been invited to the party.
- d. Present perfect progressive: I have been being invited to the party.

Meaning and Use

- 0 Agent is redundant or easy to supply:

Pineapples are grown in Hawaii.

- 0 Agent is unknown:

The bank was robbed yesterday.

0 Agent should be hidden:

An error was made in the budget.

0 To provide objectivity i.e. scientific voice.

*Up to 90% of the energy in light bulbs is wasted in the
form of heat*

The passive as a transformed version of the active voice

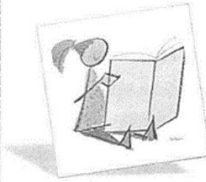
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English...
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Beavers build dams. (a true generalization)

Dams are built by beavers.



*Many Brazilians did not
support Bolsonaro (true)*

Bolsonaro was not supported by many Brazilians

a. Someone stole my bicycle

b. My bicycle was stolen by someone

2 Rewrite these active sentences using the passive form.
Omit the underlined word(s).

1 The police arrested over 30 demonstrators.

2 The recent storms have damaged a number of buildings.

3 People destroy thousands of trees every year.

4 The judge will sentence the man tomorrow.

5 Someone has stolen my computer.

My computer has been stolen by someone

6 Is anybody looking after you?

7 They presented Sarah with a gold watch.

8 Davison built the museum in 1874.

a. Someone shot the sheriff.

b. The sheriff was shot.

a. Someone killed the sheriff.

b. The sheriff was killed.

2 Rewrite these active sentences using the passive form.
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1 The police arrested over 30 demonstrators.

Over 30 demonstrators were arrested

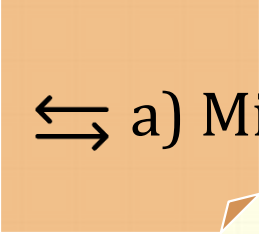
2 The recent storms have damaged a number of buildings.

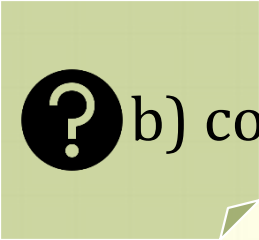
A number of buildings have been damaged (by storms? by a tsunami?)

3 People destroy thousands of trees every year.

Thousands of trees are destroyed every year (by bark beetles?)

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More problems

“Verbs are choosy”

John fell.

*John fell the floor.

John ate.

John ate the pizza.

John dined.

*John dined the pizza.

John put something somewhere

*John put something.

*John put somewhere.

*John put.

VERBS

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graph TD; A[VERBS] --> B[Transitive]; A --> C[Intransitive]; B --> D[Active: John ate the pizza]; B --> E[Passive: The pizza was eaten by John]; C --> F[John dined]
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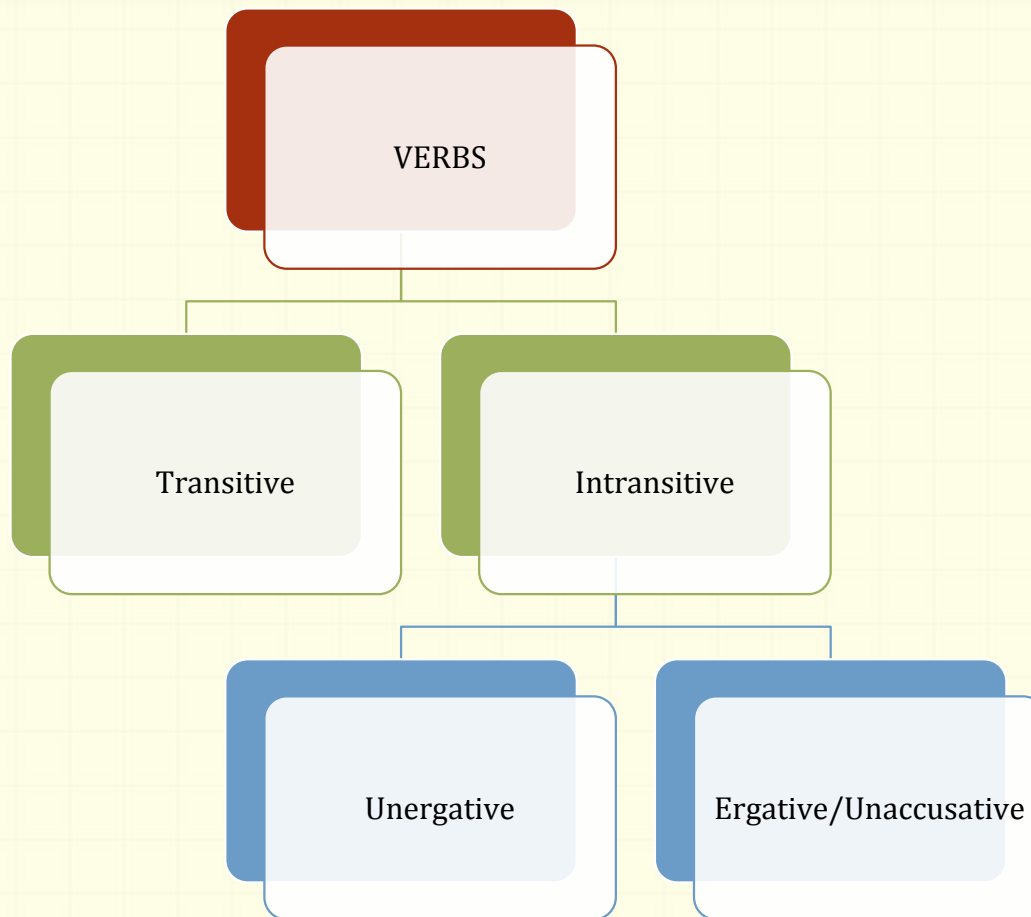
Transitive

Active: John ate the pizza

Passive: The pizza was eaten by John

Intransitive

John dined



John smiled.
John ran really fast

The water froze
The leaves fell.
An accident happened.

Animacy

- a. “The ball rolled down the slope” (moved by wind or a person)
- b. “The molecules fold in a way to protect the site”

English: *A thermometer measures the temperature*

Korean: *We [Humans] measure the temperature using a thermometer ([우리는] 온도계를 사용하여 온도를 잴다)*

A thermometer is used to measure the temperature.

(온도계는 온도를 재는데 사용된다)

English: *This chair bothers me.*

Korean: *This chair is bothersome. [이 의자는 성가시다]*

Japanese:

0 **The car** needs gas

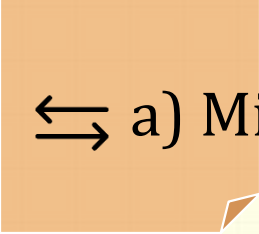
(grammatical because the car has higher animacy value than gas)

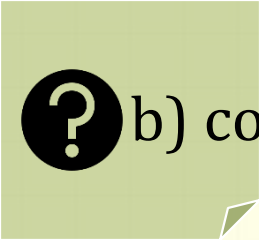
0 This article discusses **the government**

(would not be seen as correct)

0 **The government** is discussed in/by this article

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Teaching suggestions

“Textbook exercises and activities should be inspected carefully to see which dimension of language is being addressed. Just because a student is having trouble with the present perfect in English does not mean that any exercise labelled ‘present perfect’ will do”.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2003)

a Circle the correct form, active or passive.

The college *built* / *was built* in the 16th century.

- 1 The costumes for the show *are making* / *are being made* by hand.
- 2 The landscape *inspired* / *was inspired* him to write a poem.
- 3 This castle *hasn't inhabited* / *hasn't been inhabited* for nearly a century.
- 4 The director's last film *set* / *is set* in the present.
- 5 The film *will shoot* / *will be shot* in the autumn.
- 6 The actors *aren't recording* / *aren't being recorded* the dialogue until next week.
- 7 The house *wasn't using* / *wasn't being used* by the owners during the winter.
- 8 The make-up artist *has transformed* / *has been transformed* the actor into a monster.
- 9 They *hadn't owned* / *hadn't been owned* the company for very long before they went bankrupt.
- 10 The photo *took* / *was taken* by my husband on the balcony of our hotel.

b Rewrite the sentences with the passive. Only use *by* if necessary.

People don't use this room very often. *This room isn't used very often.*

- 1 They subtitle a lot of foreign films.
A lot of foreign films _____.
- 2 García Márquez wrote *Love in the Time of Cholera*.
Love in the Time of Cholera _____.
- 3 Someone is repairing my laptop.
My laptop _____.
- 4 They haven't released the DVD of the film yet.
The DVD of the film _____.
- 5 They won't finish the film until the spring.
The film _____.
- 6 You have to collect the tickets from the box office.
The tickets _____.
- 7 They hadn't told the actor about the changes in the script.
The actor _____.
- 8 James Cameron directed *Avatar*.
Avatar _____.
- 9 They've already recorded the soundtrack.
The soundtrack _____.
- 10 They were interviewing the director about the film.
The director _____.

Controlled practice

B Complete the sentences with the active or passive form of the verbs in brackets. Use the verb tense in *italics*.

- 1 The magazine _____ (read) mainly by teenagers.
It _____ (publish) every month. *present simple*
- 2 Most of his programmes _____ (not film) in Europe;
he usually _____ (work) in Asia. *present simple*
- 3 The book _____ (write) by an ex-soldier. It
_____ (describe) the war in Vietnam. *past simple*
- 4 My last company _____ (make) clothes. It _____
(buy) by a multinational company called Zed. *past simple*
- 5 The buildings _____ (clean) and the walls
_____ (paint). *present perfect*
- 6 I _____ (give) a new office but I _____ (not move)
my things in there yet. *present perfect*
- 7 Today this dish _____ (not cook) in the oven. Instead,
we _____ (use) the grill. *present continuous*

** She was passed away.*
The competition will heat up.



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we _____ (use) the grill. *present continuous*
8. I pushed the rock slightly. It _____ (roll) quickly down the hill. *past simple*
9. The wooden bridge was very old. It _____ (break) gradually. *past simple*
10. The school _____ (evolve) its own style of teaching *present perfect*
11. The water _____ (freeze) quickly. *past simple*
12. The leaves on trees _____ (change) colour in the autumn and sometimes
they _____ (fall) to the ground. *present simple*
13. The Eiffel Tower _____ (build) in 1887. *past simple*
14. An accident _____ (happen) this morning while I was driving to work.

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13. The Eiffel Tower was built (build) in 1887. *past simple*

14. An accident was (happen) this morning while I was driving to work.
past simple happened

Turkish speaker

8. I pushed the rock slightly. It was rolled (roll) quickly down the hill. *past simple*

9. The wooden bridge was very old. It was broken (break) gradually. *past simple*

10. The school have been evolved (evolve) its own style of teaching. *present perfect*

11. The water was frozen (freeze) quickly. *past simple*

12. The leaves on trees is changed (change) colour in the autumn and sometimes they falls (fall) to the ground. *present simple*

13. The Eiffel Tower was built (build) in 1887. *past simple*

14. An accident was happened (happen) this morning while I was driving to work.

Chinese speaker

8. I pushed the rock slightly. It rolled (roll) quickly down the hill. *past simple*
9. The wooden bridge was very old. It was broken (break) gradually. *past simple*
10. The school has been evolved (evolve) its own style of teaching *present perfect*
11. The water was frozen (freeze) quickly. *past simple*
12. The leaves on trees are being changed (change) colour in the autumn and sometimes they fall (fall) to the ground. *present simple*
13. The Eiffel Tower was built (build) in 1887. *past simple*
14. An accident was happened (happen) this morning while I was driving to work.
past simple

French speaker

B Complete the sentences with the active or passive form of the verbs in brackets. Use the verb tense in italics.

- 1 The magazine is read (read) mainly by teenagers.
It is published (publish) every month. *present simple*
- 2 Most of his programmes isn't filmed (not film) in Europe;
he usually works (work) in Asia. *present simple*
- 3 The book was written (write) by an ex-soldier. It
was described (describe) the war in Vietnam. *past simple*
- 4 My last company made (make) clothes. It was bought
(buy) by a multinational company called Zed. *past simple*
- 5 The buildings is cleaned (clean) and the walls
is painted (paint). *present perfect*
- 6 I gave (give) a new office but I don't move (not move)
my things in there yet. *present perfect*
- 7 Today this dish isn't been cooked (not cook) in the oven. Instead,
we are using (use) the grill. *present continuous*
8. I pushed the rock slightly. It was rolled (roll) quickly down the hill. *past simple*
9. The wooden bridge was very old. It was broken (break) gradually. *past simple*
10. The school is evolved (evolve) its own style of teaching *present perfect*
11. The water ^{was} freezed (freeze) quickly. *past simple*
12. The leaves on trees is change (change) colour in the autumn and sometimes
they fall (fall) to the ground. *present simple*
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- 6 I have been given (give) a new office but I haven't moved (not move)
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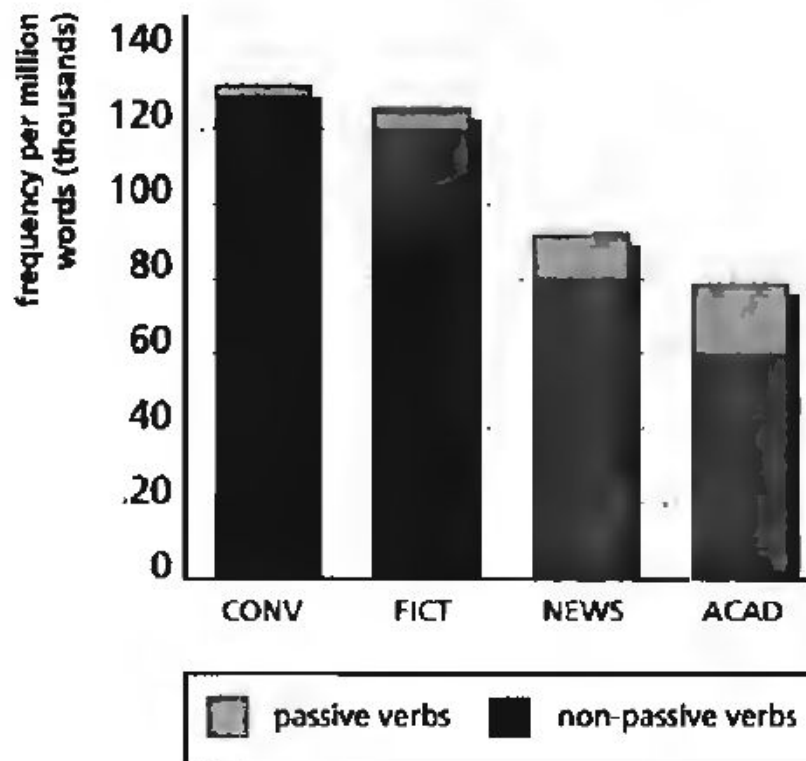


Freer practice: Trading unusual objects



It was made in Turkey
It was made by my mon.
You can carry it in your bag!
It's very useful!
You can make a house of cards!
It was designed by a Danish company
It was cooked by my host mother
I want it! How much for it?
I can use it for play
Sorry, I haven't money

Figure 6.7
Frequency of finite passive v.
non-passive verbs across registers



Biber, D. et al (1999)

MAN EATEN ALIVE BY FOX



"He was attacked... by a fox in a cemetery near Musselburgh as he was lying unconscious. **His nose was chewed and two-and-a-half fingers were bitten off. He was taken away to hospital unconscious but breathing.**

" It is not clear how the man, who has not been named, came to be unconscious in the cemetery.

A police spokesman said: "Lothian and Borders Police can confirm it is carrying out inquiries after a 37-year-old man was found in the Inveresk area in the early hours of Sunday, October 24, with injuries to his face and hand. "These injuries may have been caused by animals. He is being treated for his non-life-threatening injuries at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary."

A spokesman for the ambulance service confirmed an unconscious man with facial injuries was taken to hospital from the Inveresk cemetery.

Village resident Jack Fraser said the grisly incident had shocked the community.

headlines



<https://breakyourownnews.com/>

<https://www.fodey.com/generators/newspaper/snippet.asp>

+ BBC news start up theme (YouTube)

Narrative tenses

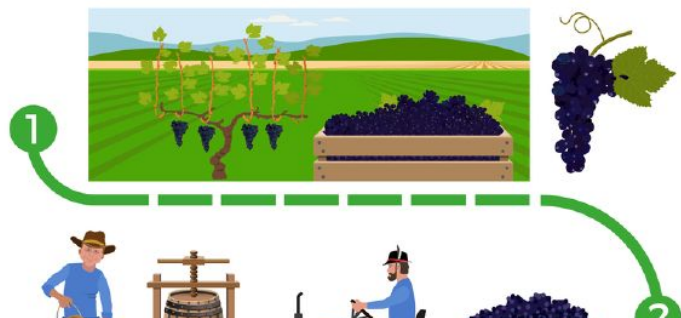
Telling a Story

Task 1: Speaking

Read these questions about a story then use your own answers to invent the story.

1. How long had it been raining?
2. What was Paul doing when he first saw the old man?
3. Was he surprised to see a man with wings?
4. What did Paul's wife say when he told her about the old man with wings?
5. What did the people of their village do when they saw the old man with wings?
6. Why didn't the priest believe that he was an angel?
7. Where did Paul and his wife keep the old man?
8. How much money did they charge people to look at him?
9. How long did he stay with them?
10. What was Paul doing when he saw the old man fly away?

These questions are based around the short story 'A very Old Man with Enormous Wings' by Gabriel Garcia Marquez



How is wine made?

People have been making wine for thousands of years. It is not only an art, but also a science. So, how is it made? Well, there are four main stages.

_____,¹ the grapes are picked by hand or mechanically. This is called 'harvesting'.

_____,² the grapes are transported to the winery, where they are pressed into a juice called 'must'.

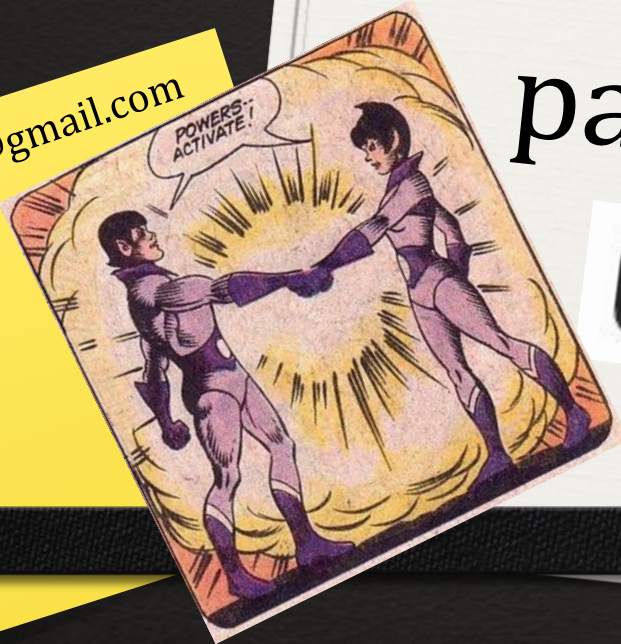
_____,³ the must is transferred into wooden barrels and the sugar in the juice is slowly converted into alcohol. This process is called 'fermentation' and it can take anywhere from 10 days to one month or more.

_____,⁴ the wine is filtered (the hard pieces in the liquid are removed) and transferred into bottles. This is called 'bottling'. _____⁵ bottling, the winemaker also has the option to leave the wine to improve the quality. This process is called 'aging'. Aging typically takes anywhere from 2 to 30 years.

Conclusions

“Mistakes were made”
President Reagan (1986)

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Activating the passive voice



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One of the major functions of the passive is that it demotes the agent of the verb (often the person doing the action of the verb, cf. 3.2.1.1), while giving topic status to the affected patient (the entity being acted on, cf. 3.2.4.1). For example, the first two passive sentences in the above passage use short passives to omit the agent altogether, as can be seen from the corresponding active sentences:

[We, the researchers,] exposed three communities to elevated carbon dioxide concentrations.

[We, the researchers,] describe the study site and experimental design in Curtis et al. (1989a).

The short passive is in fact far more common than the long passive, and is widely used in academic writing to omit mention of the specific researcher(s). In part, this extensive use of passive constructions conveys an objective detachment from what is being described, as required by the Western scientific tradition. However, it might also be regarded simply as the expected style typical of much academic writing.

News has somewhat different reasons for the use of the passive, especially the short passive. Often the focus of a story is an event involving an affected person or institution, and the agent of this event may be easy to infer, uninteresting, or already mentioned. Hence, with a journalistic desire to save space and maximize what is novel, it is natural to omit these agents. For example, reference to 'the police' is omitted in an example like: