

Special passives

Remember the normal pattern for **active** and **passive** structures:

ACTIVE: She bought the old house

PASSIVE: The old house was bought (by her)

This is the basic form for most passive sentences, but some of them have special characteristics. These are the main ones:

- When the active verb has two objects, a direct and an indirect one, **the indirect object is often the subject in the passive form.** (with verbs like: *give, show, pay, ask, tell, offer, send, lend, refuse, promise, teach*, etc.)

They gave Tom the first prize → Tom was given the first prize

- Verbs like *say, know, believe, report, expect, consider, allege* or *think* allow **two different passive forms:**

People say that Jane is a genius → It is said that Jane is a genius / Jane is said to be a genius

The police believe that the painting was stolen → It is believed that the painting was stolen

The painting is believed to have been stolen

- The structure **"to have something done"** has a passive meaning: it means someone does something for us.

George decorated the bedroom (active form meaning 'he did it himself')

George had the room decorated (passive form meaning 'George arranged for someone to decorate it')

Your turn now! Make the necessary changes in the following sentences to turn them into passive:

- A lot of people consider that Spain is a great holiday destination.

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- The company has offered Mary a better position.

.....

- We should phone him at once.

.....

- We teach our students English, German and French.

.....

- They serve me a cup of coffee every morning.

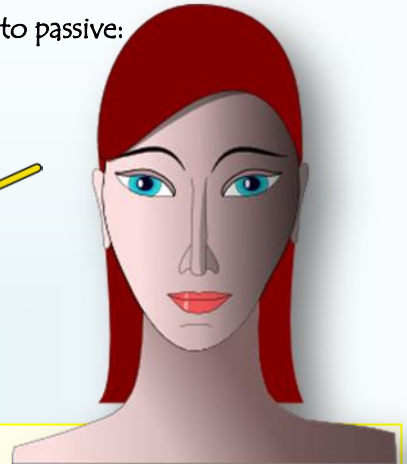
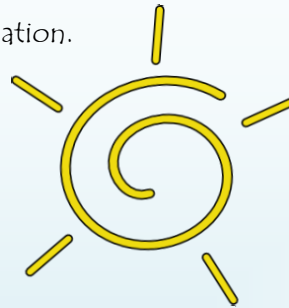
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- We had sent you all the information.

.....

- Someone told her all the answers.

.....



- The film will scare them

.....

- Who stole the money?

.....

- People consider that Susan is very strange.

.....

- They are painting their new home

.....

- People believed that witches stole babies.

.....

- I'll repair the car tomorrow.

.....

- Walmart has offered him a job

.....

- We can't solve the problem

.....



Answer key:

Your turn now! Make the necessary changes in the following sentences to turn them into passive:

- ✿ A lot of people consider that Spain is a great holiday destination.
Spain is considered to be a great holiday destination
It is considered that Spain is a great holiday destination
 - ✿ The company has offered Mary a better position.
Mary has been offered a better position
A better position has been offered to Ann
 - ✿ We should phone him at once.
He should be phoned at once
 - ✿ We teach our students English, German and French.
Our students are taught English, German and French
English, German and French are taught to our students
 - ✿ They serve me a cup of coffee every morning.
I am served a cup of coffee every morning
A cup of coffee is served to me every morning
 - ✿ We had sent you all the information.
You had been sent all the information
All the information had been sent to you
 - ✿ Someone told her all the answers.
She was told all the answers
All the answers were told her
- ✿ The film will scare them
They will be scared by the film
 - ✿ Who stole the money?
Who was the money stolen by?
 - ✿ People consider that Susan is very strange.
Susan is considered to be very strange
It is considered that Susan is very strange
 - ✿ They are painting their new home
They are having their new home painted
 - ✿ People believed that witches stole babies.
Witches were believed to steal babies
It was believed that witches stole babies
 - ✿ I'll repair the car tomorrow.
I'll have the car repaired tomorrow
 - ✿ Walmart has offered him a job
He was offered a job at Walmart
A job was offered him at Walmart
 - ✿ We can't solve the problem
The problem can't be solved