

# Unit 7 Passive 2

## Explanations

Have and get  
something done,  
need doing

### 1 Have something done

This usually describes a service performed for us by someone else.

*I've just had my car serviced.*

It can also describe something unfortunate that happens to someone.

*We have had our car stolen so we need a lift.*

This applies to a range of tenses:

*I'm having my flat painted next week.*

*I have it done every year.*

*Sheila had her hair done yesterday.*

*I was having the roof repaired when it happened.*

Note the quite different colloquial expressions *have someone round/over*.

In this case, there is no sense of a service.

*We had some friends round for dinner last night.*

### 2 Get something done

*Get* cannot be used in all the same contexts as *have* in this case. *Get* is common where there is a feeling that something must be done:

*I must get my car serviced.*

It is also common in orders and imperatives:

*Get your hair cut!*

There is also a feeling of eventually managing something in some uses:

*I eventually got the car fixed.*

*Sue always gets things done in this office.*

### 3 The need to have a service done can be described with *need doing*.

*Your hair needs cutting.*

Passive *get*

*Get* can be used instead of *be* to form the passive in spoken language.

*Martin got arrested at a football match.*

Reporting verbs

### 1 Present reference

With verbs such as *believe*, *know*, *say*, *think* which report people's opinions, a passive construction is often used to avoid a weak subject, and to give a generalised opinion.

With present reference, the passive is followed by the present infinitive.

*People think that Smith is in England.*

*Smith is thought to be in England.*

2 Past reference

With past reference, the passive is followed by the perfect past infinitive.

*People believe that Smith left England last week.  
Smith is believed to have left England last week.*

3 Past reporting verb

If the reporting verb is in the past, the perfect infinitive tends to follow, though not always if the verb *be* is used.

*People thought Sue had paid too much.  
Sue was thought to have paid too much.  
The police thought that the thief was still in the house.  
The thief was thought to still be in the house.*

4 With passive infinitive

*Everyone knows the portrait was painted by an Italian.  
The portrait is known to have been painted by an Italian.*

5 If there are two objects, two versions are possible.

*The portrait is known to have been painted by an Italian.  
An Italian is known to have painted the portrait.*

6 Continuous infinitive

Past and present continuous infinitives are also used.

*Mary is thought to be living in Scotland.  
The driver is thought to have been doing a U-turn.*

Verbs with prepositions

1 Ending a sentence with a preposition

It is possible to end a sentence with a preposition in a sentence where a prepositional verb is made passive.

*Someone broke into our house.  
Our house was broken into.*

2 By and with

*With* is used after participles such as *filled, packed, crowded, crammed*.

*The train was packed with commuters.*

The difference between *by* and *with* may involve the presence of a person:

*Dave was hit by a branch. (an accident)  
Dave was hit with a branch. (a person hit him with one)*

3 *Make* is followed by *to* when used in the passive.

*My boss made me work hard.  
I was made to work hard by my boss.*

4 *Cover* and verbs which involve similar ideas, such as *surround, decorate* can use *with* or *by*. *Cover* can also be followed by *in*.

Common contexts for the passive

- 1 Formality  
The passive is probably more common in written English, where there tends to be less use of personal reference in some contexts, since the audience may be unknown.
- 2 Points mentioned in Unit 6  
The passive is used to change the focus of the sentence, to avoid generalised subjects, and to make an action impersonal. It is common in descriptions of processes, and in scientific and technical language in general.

## Activities

### 1

Decide whether the sentences in each pair have the same meaning.

- a) Someone is painting our house at the moment.  
We are painting our house at the moment. (*different*)
- b) The dentist is going to take out two of my teeth tomorrow.  
I'm having two teeth taken out tomorrow. (*same*)
- c) Someone stole Mary's motorbike last week.  
Mary had stolen her motorbike last week.



- d) I've just been to the hairdresser's. What do you think?  
I've just cut my hair at the hairdresser's. What do you think?
- e) Someone has broken into my car.  
My car has been broken.
- f) Just a minute. I'll ask someone to wrap this for you.  
Just a minute. I'll have to wrap this up for you.
- g) The car hasn't been serviced for a long time.  
We haven't had the car serviced for a long time.
- h) They're coming to put in a new water-heater next week.  
We're putting in a new water-heater next week.
- i) Would you consider having plastic surgery to alter your nose?  
Would you consider having your nose altered by plastic surgery?
- j) A qualified electrician checked the wiring.  
We had checked the wiring with a qualified electrician.

### 2

Decide in each sentence whether only one or both verbs underlined are suitable.

- a) Jean had/got her handbag snatched.
- b) Unfortunately my uncle was/got killed in the war.
- c) I work slowly, but I have/get my jobs done in the end.
- d) I must have/get these trousers altered.
- e) It took all day, but I eventually had/got the washing-machine repaired.
- f) Several people were/got left behind when the bus drove off.
- g) We have had/got all our money stolen, so we need help.

- h) Why don't you have/get the cooker seen to?
- i) Paul was/got injured after he had been playing for only five minutes.
- j) Helen had/got her house painted last year as usual.

**3**

Rewrite each sentence, beginning as shown, so that the meaning stays the same.

- a) People think that neither side wanted war.  
Neither side is *thought to have wanted war*.
- b) Everyone knows that eating fruit is good for you.  
Eating fruit .....
- c) Everyone thought the painting had been destroyed.  
The painting .....
- d) People say that the company bid fifty million pounds for the shares.  
The company .....
- e) People say the late Mr Johnson was difficult to work with.  
The late .....
- f) People think the jewels were stolen by one of the guests.  
One of the guests .....
- g) It is believed that the Chinese invented gunpowder.  
The Chinese .....
- h) Apparently the ship did not sustain any damage.  
The ship .....
- i) It is thought that the two injured men were repairing high-tension cables.  
The two injured men .....
- j) There is a rumour that the escaped prisoner is living in Spain.  
The escaped prisoner .....

**4**

Rewrite each sentence so that it contains the word in capitals.

- a) We believe that the government has prepared a plan. HAVE  
*The government is believed to have prepared a plan.*
- b) We are thinking of getting someone to paint the outside of the house. PAINTED  
.....
- c) In the end I was unable to find a garage to service my car. GET  
.....
- d) People say that Mrs Turner was having business difficulties. BEEN  
.....
- e) The treasure is thought to date from the thirteenth century. IT  
.....
- f) The police towed away Alan's car. GOT  
.....
- g) Your hair needs cutting. GET  
.....
- h) The police believe that a professional thief stole the statue. BEEN  
.....
- i) Jill's parents are making her study hard. MADE  
.....

j) Everyone thought that Helen had missed the train. TO

.....

5

Rewrite each sentence so that it ends with the word underlined.

- a) Another company has taken over our company.  
*Our company has been taken over.*.....
- b) We are dealing with your complaint.  
.....
- c) We have not accounted for all the missing passengers.  
.....
- d) Someone had tampered with the lock of the front door.  
.....
- e) We don't know how they disposed of the body.  
.....
- f) I must insist that you keep to the rules.  
.....
- g) We are looking into this allegation.  
.....
- h) We will frown upon any attempts to cheat in the exam.  
.....
- i) The youngest complained that people were picking on him.  
.....
- j) Ann was well provided for in her husband's will.  
.....

6

Choose the most appropriate word underlined.

- a) The busy shopping street was thronged by/with people.
- b) The emergency exit was concealed by/from a red curtain.
- c) The price of excursions is included in/with the cost of the holiday.
- d) All through January, the fields were covered by/from snow.
- e) The room was crammed by/with furniture of all descriptions.
- f) Two of the climbers were injured by/with falling rocks.
- g) The island is inhabited by/from people of mainly Chinese origin.
- h) The bank was quickly surrounded from/with armed police.
- i) The window had been smashed from/with a hammer taken from the tool-shed.
- j) The stadium was packed from/with cheering fans.

7

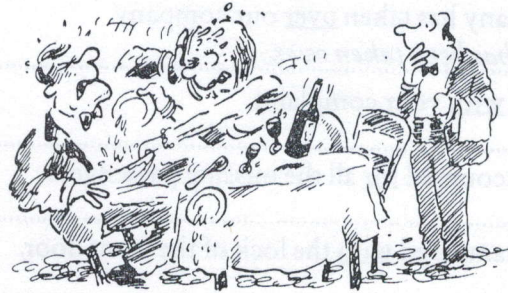
Put a suitable preposition in each space.

- a) The tree had been decorated with coloured balls.
- b) The answers have been included ..... the book.
- c) After the rugby match, Jim's shorts were covered ..... mud.
- d) The victim was struck from behind ..... a heavy object.
- e) The house was built ..... money that David borrowed from the bank.
- f) The cat narrowly escaped being run over ..... a car.
- g) When the accident happened, Sue was struck ..... flying glass.
- h) The turkey was stuffed ..... chestnuts, and was very tasty.
- i) No one knew that Peter had been involved ..... the investigation.
- j) When I left the casino, my pockets were crammed ..... money.

8

Rewrite each sentence so that it begins *It* .....

- a) They have decided to cancel the match.  
It *has been decided to cancel the match* .....
- b) We thought it was necessary to send a telegram.  
It .....
- c) We have agreed to meet again in a fortnight.  
It .....



- d) There is a rumour that the couple are to seek a divorce.  
It .....
- e) There is confirmation of Mr Jackson's resignation.  
It .....
- f) We believe that the ship has sunk.  
It .....
- g) There was a proposal that a new offer should be made.  
It .....
- h) We didn't think it was a good idea.  
It .....
- i) We decided to try again later.  
It .....
- j) There has been a suggestion that I should take a holiday.  
It .....

9

Rewrite the text using the passive where possible and so that the words underlined do not appear.

Nobody knows exactly when someone invented gunpowder. People know for a fact that the Chinese made rockets and fireworks long before people used gunpowder in Europe, which occurred at about the beginning of the thirteenth century. We generally believe that gunpowder brought to an end the 'Age of Chivalry', since anyone with a firearm could bring down a mounted knight. In fact, people did not develop efficient firearms until the sixteenth century. They used gunpowder mainly in siege cannon when people first introduced it. Later they used it in engineering work and in mining, but they found that it was extremely dangerous. Modern explosives have now replaced gunpowder, but we still use it for making fireworks, just as the Chinese did.

*It is not known exactly* .....