

Tenses, active and passive structures (selection)

I. Tenses

II. Active and passive structures

I. Tenses

Tenses	Active structures : Simple	Active structures : Continuous	Passive structures
Present	I call	I am calling	I am called
Past	I called	I was calling	I was called
Present perfect	I have called	I have been calling	I have been called
Past perfect	I had called	I had been calling	I had been called
Future	I will call	I will be calling	I will be called
		be + -ing	be + -ed

Questions:

do you call/does he call?

did you/he call?

have you called?

had you called

will you call?

Remember:

1. – ing forms (without “be”): 1. calling = volání; writing = psaní

Writing English papers is difficult.

2. calling = volající; writing = píšící; psací; sitting = sedící

Who is the girl sitting next to you?

I need a new writing desk.

2. – ed form (without “be”): called = nazvaný, volaný; written = (na)psaný, písemný

I prefer written examinations to oral examinations.

3. I won't do it (*I will not do it*) = neudělám to

I want to do it = chci to udělat

II. Active and passive structures

Examples:

Active structures

Our department organized

that conference.

The teacher told me to start at once.

Passive structures

That conference was organized by our department.

I was told to start at once.

The object of the active structure becomes the subject of the passive structure. The subject of the active structure becomes the agent and is introduced by “by”. The agent is normally not included but is expressed if the speaker considers it important.

The prize is normally given by the Dean, not

by the Rector.

The University offered **me** a well-paid job.

I was offered a well-paid job
(by the University).

The University offered me **a well-paid job**.

A well-paid job was offered to me
(by the University).

Many verbs can be followed by two objects; one referring to a person, one referring to a thing. Both of them can become subjects of the passive structure. Most often the person becomes the subject.

Note:

In many types of academic English, especially scientific English, the passive structure is more common than the active structure because what is/was done is more important than who does/did it.

In this experiment water was heated to 150°C.

Rather than: *In this experiment we heated water to 150°C.*

See also Guidelines for Academic Writing: Typical features of Academic English.

EXERCISES

I. Correct the following sentences.

1. How much time takes it to prepare the test?

.....

2. What means FEM?

.....

3. That's how does it work.

.....

4. Why you use conductive polymers?

.....

5. A new program was been designed.

.....

6. First of all I going to draw a diagram.

.....

7. It is mean that ... /It is means that

.....

8. The next procedure will be focus on

.....

9. The paper don't have to be long.

.....

10. This method we use in other cases.

.....

11. We didn't discussed this problem at the meeting.

.....

12. Why you used this method?

.....

II. Reformulate the following sentences by using passive structures.

1. You can find an analysis of the results in Table 1.

.....

2. They will not reach a decision until the next meeting.

.....

3. Their decision to join the project surprised me.

.....

4. He taught us to operate the new device.

.....

5. I am afraid that they will blame us for this failure.

.....

6. He has explained the procedure to us.

.....

7. They conducted the test in the Faculty laboratory.

.....

8. I am sure that they will apply the new technology to almost every industrial process.

.....

9. The teacher asked us to describe our method.

.....

10. He instructed us to solve the problems in as short a time as possible.

.....

11. She asked me to describe what I had done.

.....

12. He showed us the new design.

.....

13. We will not publish our findings until next month.

.....

14. They often make mistakes in interpreting the data.

.....

15. We expect the figures to fall rapidly.

.....