

The Passive Voice

Present Simple Passive / Past Simple Passive / Future Simple Passive

The passive voice

WHAT IS IT?

- We use the passive voice when we want to **emphasise the action** and not the subject
- It is generally used in **formal contexts** and in **written texts**

The passive voice

WHEN DO WE USE IT?



When the **focus** is on **the action**.

My bike was stolen.

The focus is on the fact that my bike was stolen; I don't know who did it.

The passive voice

WHEN DO WE USE IT?

2

We use the passive voice when **the subject is not important, unnecessary or we don't know it.**

The fire was put off.

It may be evident that firefighters put it off.

The passive voice

WHEN DO WE USE IT?

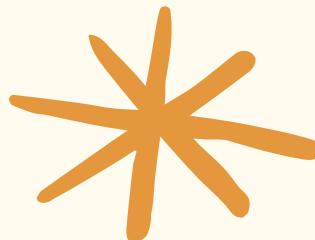
3

We use it when **we don't want to mention the subject or we want to be polite.**
A mistake was made.

We don't want to blame anybody for making the mistake.

The passive voice

WHEN DO WE USE IT?



Nevertheless, there are cases in which we want to indicate who did the action. In this case, we use the preposition **BY**.

The Scarlet Letter was written by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

The fire was put off by a neighbour.

The gardens were cleaned by prisoners.

The passive voice

FORM

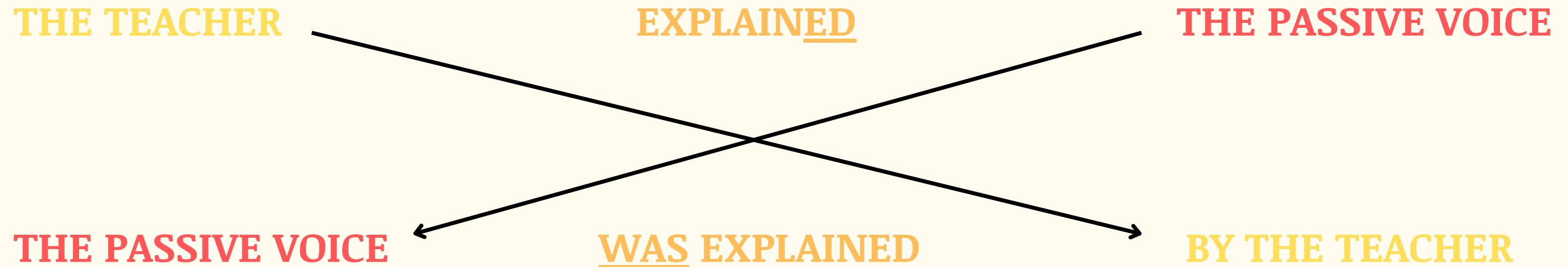
SUBJECT + **verb to be** + **past pp** + **(by someone)**

THE FLOWERS **WERE** **BOUGHT** **BY HER MUM**

THE DINNER **IS** **COOKED** **BY NANCY**

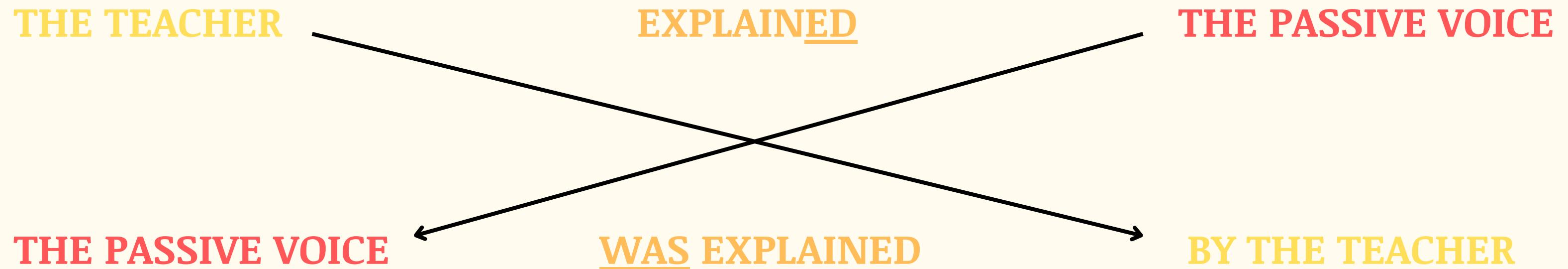
The passive voice

FROM ACTIVE TO PASSIVE



The passive voice

NOTE: The verb “to be” in the passive and the main verb in the active voice show **THE SAME VERBAL TENSE** (e.g. past simple)



The passive voice

DIRECT VS INDIRECT

Sometimes we can find sentences with two objects:

DIRECT OBJECT & INDIRECT OBJECT

SHE GAVE ME A RED CARNATION

In this case, we can form two different passive sentences:

I WAS GIVEN A RED CARNATION (BY HER)

A RED CARNATION WAS GIVEN TO ME (BY HER)

The passive voice

TENSE	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
PRESENT SIMPLE	I send the mail	The mail <u>is</u> sent (by me)
PAST SIMPLE	I sent the mail	The mail <u>was</u> sent (by me)
FUTURE SIMPLE	I will send the mail	The mail <u>will</u> be send

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

People **speak** Portuguese in Brazil.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

People **speak** Portuguese in Brazil.

Portuguese **is spoken** in Brazil.

- It is not necessary to put “by people”. It is obvious that Portuguese is spoken by people, not cats.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

The newspaper **publishes** the statistics of unemployment.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

The newspaper **publishes** the statistics of unemployment.

The statistics of unemployment **are published** by the newspaper.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

People **transmitted** traditions orally in ancient times.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

People **transmitted** traditions orally in ancient times.

Traditions **were transmitted** orally in ancient times.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

They **made** the funeral in the morning.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

They **made** the funeral in the morning.

The funeral **was made** in the morning.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

The audience **applauded** the composer.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

The audience **applauded** the composer.

The composer **was applauded** by the audience.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

They **make** a lot of paper from wood.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

They **make** a lot of paper from wood.

A lot of paper **is made** from wood.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

German teams **won** most of the matches.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

German teams **won** most of the matches.

Most of the matches **were won** by German teams.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

Our government **will export a great amount of our oil** to other countries.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

Our government **will export a great amount of our oil** to other countries.

A great amount of our oil **will be exported to other countries by our government.**

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

Computers **make** fewer mistakes than people.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

Computers **make** fewer mistakes than people.

Fewer mistakes **are made** by computers than (by) people.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

The students **will finish** the course by July.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

John **gave** a bar of chocolate to Jill.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

John **gave** a bar of chocolate **to** Jill.

Jill **was given** a bar of chocolate by John.

A bar of chocolate **was given** to Jill by John.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

The boss **will show** the new computer to Anna.

The passive voice

LET'S PRACTISE A BIT!

The boss **will show** the new computer to Anna.

The new computer **will be shown** to Anna by the boss.

Anna **will be shown** the new computer by the boss.