Passive Grammar – the basics

Passive Grammar is...
...common in academic English because it helps to create formality, focus on the object and develop an impersonal stance.

Structure: **verb to be + past participle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>active</th>
<th>passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Harris</td>
<td>Our food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cooks our</td>
<td>is cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verb</td>
<td>passive verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>food</td>
<td>by Mrs Harris</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RULE:** The main use of the passive is to say who / what was affected not who did the action (the doer)

**Common Example**

Hurricane kills 3,000 people

In a newspaper:

3,000 people are killed by Hurricane

**RULE:** focus of the passive sentence is on the object - in this case the object is more important than the cause

**Passive Rules:**

Explain why the passive has been used in these sentences

1. *My car was stolen last night* – *we don’t know who stole it*
2. *Hamlet was written by Shakespeare*
3. *All the computers are checked before they leave the factory*
4. *The Prisoner is being taken to Jail*
5. *The problem is being dealt with in our accounts department*
6. *Smoking is prohibited in the station*
### Passive Tense Structures

Fill in the passive column with the correct form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Passive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present simple</td>
<td>People speak English in China</td>
<td>English is spoken in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Continuous</td>
<td>Decorators are painting our house</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Past simple</td>
<td>The police caught the thief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Future Perfect</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal present</td>
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<td>Modal perfect</td>
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### Tense Exercise – write the correct tense using the verb in brackets

1. The election ________________________(hold) next week.
2. Antibiotics __________________________(develop) in the 1930’s.
3. The new bridge ________________________(open) by the Queen.
4. More and more cars ______________________(produce) every year.
5. We _________________________________(invite) to Paul’s wedding.
6. Every car which left the ferry ___________________(stop) and searched.
7. The door ______________________________(leave) open on purpose.
8. Everyone who applies ______________________(give) an interview.
10. He _________________________________(promote) 3 times before becoming a director.
11. By 2050 the first space station ________________________(build).
Passive Speaking

Have you ever been....
attacked by a dog / animal
hit by a teacher / parent / another person
interviewed for radio or TV
hit by a car
stopped by police
operated on
proposed to
told off by a teacher / parent / friend
arrested by the police
offered drugs / illegal products
taken to hospital by ambulance
given a prize
accused of doing something you didn’t do
caught doing something illegal

Processes

What is manufactured in your country?
What are the main crops grown in your country?
What alcohol is produced in your country?
What is exported and imported in your country?
How is electricity generated in your country?
### Passive Grammar – the basics **ANSWERS**

**Passive Rules Answers**

1. *My car was stolen last night*
   
   *We do not know who stole it*

2. *Hamlet was written by Shakespeare*
   
   *The focus is on the book not Shakespeare*

3. *All the computers are checked before they leave the factory*
   
   *It is not important to know who - that Pete and John do it*

4. *The Prisoner is being taken to Jail*
   
   *It is known who takes the prisoner - the police*

5. *The problem is being dealt with in our accounts department. Formality less personal and friendly*

6. *Smoking is prohibited in the station Rules and regulations*

### Tense Answers

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Tense Exercise ANSWERS

1. The election is being held next week
2. Antibiotics were developed in the 1930’s
3. The new bridge is going to be opened by the Queen
4. More and more cars are sold every year
5. We have been invited to Paul’s wedding
6. Every car which left the ferry was being stopped and searched
7. The door may have been left open on purpose.
8. Everyone who applies will be given an interview
9. Books must be returned within 3 weeks
10. He had been promoted 3 times before becoming a director
11. By 2050 the first space station will have been built

N.B: more than one answer is possible