

Unit 1 Handout 1

The Simple Past Passive

In **active voice sentences** the subject *does* the action.

Example: Liz played the piano. = subject + verb

In **passive voice sentences** the subject *receives* the action.

Example: The piano was played by Liz. = subject + verb be + past participle

Active When we focus on the doer or cause	Passive When we focus on the receiver
A student found a bag on a bus	A bag was found on a bus
The authorities closed the airport	The airport was closed
A woman saw two bears in a yard	Two bears were seen in a yard
A police officer shot an Uber driver	An Uber driver was shot
The Congress approved the Trans-Pacific Partnership Deal	The Trnas.Pacific Partnership Deal was approved

Activity

1. Rewrite the sentences. Use the simple past passive.

Active	Passive
Someone saw a snake on the subway	
Someone sold a famous painting for \$6,000,000	
Someone left lots of garbage on the sidewalk	
Someone broke into a store and stole some soccer balls	
Someone found a diamond ring in a doughnut	
They cancelled school throughout the city	

Unit 1 Handout 1

2. What are the *tenses* used in each active form?

Active	Passive
The criminals steal diamonds	Diamonds are stolen
The criminals are stealing diamonds	Diamonds are being stolen
The criminals have stolen diamonds	Diamonds have been stolen
The criminals stole diamonds	Diamonds were stolen
The criminals were stealing diamonds	Diamonds were being stolen
The criminals had stolen diamonds	Diamonds had been stolen
The criminals will steal diamonds	Diamonds will be stolen
The criminals are going to steal diamonds	Diamonds are going to be stolen

3. Complete these fragments using the *passive voice*. After each fragment there is a paraphrase using *active voice* to tell you which verb to use and which tense.

- a. According to experts, members of the public _____ that they must be more vigilant about discarding personal records. (People **are telling** members of the public...)

- b. The term phishing _____ to describe the practice of creating look-alike websites to get the clients' credit cards details. (People **use** the term phishing to describe...)

- c. The employees _____ this week that they are at risk of identity theft. (Somebody **told** the employees this week that ...)

- d. It's unclear whether the laptops _____ because of the information they contain or to cause chaos. (It's unclear whether criminals **are targeting** the laptops)

- e. It appears the data _____. (It appears someone **encrypted** the data)

- f. In the US, the practice _____ as a real risk to consumers and businesses for many years. (People **have recognised** the practice as...)

Unit 1 Handout 1

4. Complete the short newspaper stories with a suitable verb from the choices below.

arrest	sentence	steal	kill	handcuff	rescue	injure
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1. POLICE THEFT

A Television set (1) _____ from a Liverpool police station while officers were out fighting a crime.

2. PLANE DRAMA

A drunk who tried to open an airplane door at 30,000 feet (2) _____ for the rest of Denmark to Thailand flight.

3. CAMPER DIES

Camper John Barnes, 23, (3) _____ after a 200- meter fall into a rocky ravine with only a broken foot. Sadly, he (4) _____ when he fell out of the ambulance on the way to the hospital in Perth, Scotland.

4. UNLUCKY BURGLAR

Burglar Frank Gort broke down and sobbed when he (5) _____ to seven years in jail, claiming it was his unlucky number. An understanding judge in San Antonio, Texas, took pity and gave him eight years instead.

5. WANTED MAN JAILED

Fugitive James Sanders, who escaped from jail in 1975, (6) _____ in Texas after ringing the FBI to check if he was still on the wanted list.

6. STABBED IN THE BACK

Mr. Clarence Ramsey (7) _____ seriously _____ yesterday when a man came up behind him and stabbed him in the back. Turning around to face his attacker, Mr. Ramsey was surprised to hear him say, "Sorry I thought You were somebody else."