

# IMPERSONAL PASSIVE VOICE

Verbs that refer to saying or thinking ( **think, believe, say, report, know, consider, presume, hope...**) are often followed by a to-infinitive form in the passive.

Example: *The police **think** he **is** in Argentina. He **is thought to be** in Argentina.*

There are **FOUR INFINITIVE FORMS**, which we will use depending on the tense we have in the active sentence.

- Simple **to write** escribir
- Continuous **to be writing** estar escribiendo
- Perfect **to have written** haber escrito
- Perf. Continuous **to have been writing** haber estado escribiendo

## IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS TYPE OF PASSIVE SENTENCE, WE

- 1 Take the subject of the second sentence: **He**
- 2 Passive verb of the Reporting verb in the same tense as in the active: **is thought**
- 3 The verb of the second sentence in the Infinitive form: **to be**

## WHICH FORM OF THE INFINITIVE DO WE USE?

- If it carries an **idea of present or future** → Simple: **to write**
- If it carries **an idea of past**, whatever the tense (Past Simple, Past Perfect, Present Perfect) → Perfect: **to have written**.
- If either of them are in a **continuous form**, you use the adequate Infinitive continuous form → **to be writing** or **to have been writing**

## SOME MORE EXAMPLES:

### ACTIVE

*They say she **works** hard.*

*They say she **played** well.*

### PASSIVE

*She is said **to work** hard.*

*She is said **to have played** well.*

They said she **has done** well.

She was said **to have done** well.

They believe he **is having** an affair.

He is believed **to be having** an affair.

She believes the repairs **have been finished**. The repairs are believed **to have been**

**Finished**.

## **GET / HAVE SOMETHING DONE (Passive Voice)**

*This construction is passive in meaning. It may describe situations where we want someone else to do something for us.*

### **Examples**

- *I must **get / have my hair cut**.*
- *When are you going to **get that window mended**?*
- *We're **having the house painted**.*

If the verb refers to something negative or unwanted, it has the same meaning as a passive sentence:

- *Jim **had his car stolen** last night. (= Jim's car was stolen)*
- *They **had their roof blown off** in the storm. (= Their roof was blown off in the storm)*

The construction can refer to the completion of an activity, especially if a time expression is used:

- *We'll **get the work done** as soon as possible.*
- *I'll **get those letters typed** before lunchtime.*

In all these sentences, we are more interested in the result of the activity than in the person or object that performs the activity.

## **EXERCISES**

### **IMPERSONAL PASSIVE**

1. People believe that English is the most widely spoken language  
It is believed that English is the most widely spoken language.  
English is believed to be the most widely spoken language.

2. Police have reported that Peter caused the accident.  
It has been reported that Peter caused the accident.  
Peter has been reported to have caused the accident.

3. A journalist reports that they are leaving Las Vegas tomorrow night.

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4. The lecturer thought that Columbus never realized that he had discovered America.

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5. Their parents thought that the teenagers were dancing at the disco.

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6. Everybody thinks that she sings beautifully

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7. The children reported that their friends were swimming when they disappeared.

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8. People believed that they had killed the animals during the night.

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9. My friends think that my parents are the best parents in the world.

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10. They believed that the horse was a present.

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11. People are thinking that drugs are very dangerous.

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12. They knew that Mr. Brown was stealing iron from the factory.

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13. Ancient people thought that the stars would fall on them.

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14. People consider that the team will be classified for the final.

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15. Everybody says that he settled the business.

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**Change the sentences to passive voice.**

1. They introduced me to her husband
2. Someone sold this old hat to my wife.
3. They are pushing the car.
4. Someone broke into my office.
5. You ought to clean the desk.
6. The headmaster will contact you.
7. Nobody has given out the news yet.
8. Didn't she tell you the truth?
9. The thieves had stolen all the gold.
10. The students are using the computers right now.
11. Someone is knocking at the door.
12. They might take the old man to the hospital.
13. They could have kicked her out of the restaurant.

14. We will have to give them more attention.
15. The cat ate the sandwich.
16. They told us that the water is clean.
17. Millions of fans will see the final game tomorrow.
18. They told us to leave the room.
19. The doctors have made the announcements over the loudspeakers.
20. People believed that she had left the town.

**Turn these sentences into the active voice.**

1. My books were stolen yesterday.
2. These books had been left in the classroom by a careless student.
3. Coffee is raised in many parts of Hawaii by plantation workers.
4. The house had been broken into while the owners were on vacation.
5. A woman was being carried downstairs by a very strong firefighter.
6. The streets around the fire had been blocked off by the police.
7. Have you seen the new movie that was directed by Ron Howard?
8. My car is in the garage being fixed by a dubious mechanic.
9. A great deal of our oil will have been exported to other countries by our government
10. He is known to be armed.