

## Passive (3)

A

I was born...

We say: I was born... (not 'I am born'):

- I was born in Chicago.
- Where were you born? (not 'where are you born')
- but • How many babies are born every day?

} past simple

} present simple

B

Some verbs can have two objects. For example, give:

- We gave the police the information. (= We gave the information to the police.)  
object 1                      object 2

So it is possible to make two passive sentences:

- The police were given the information. or The information was given to the police.

Other verbs which can have two objects are: ask offer pay show teach tell

When we use these verbs in the passive, most often we begin with the person:

- I was offered the job but I refused it. (= they offered me the job)
- You will be given plenty of time to decide. (= we will give you plenty of time)
- Have you been shown the new machine? (= has anybody shown you...?)
- The men were paid £200 to do the work. (= somebody paid the men £200)

C

I don't like being...

The passive of doing/seeing etc. is being done / being seen etc. Compare:

active: I don't like people telling me what to do.

passive: I don't like being told what to do.

- I remember being given a toy drum on my fifth birthday. (= I remember somebody giving me a toy drum...)
- Mr Miller hates being kept waiting. (= he hates people keeping him waiting)
- We managed to climb over the wall without being seen. (= ...without anybody seeing us)

D

Get

Sometimes you can use get instead of be in the passive:

- There was a fight at the party but nobody got hurt. (= nobody was hurt)
- I don't often get invited to parties. (= I'm not often invited)
- I'm surprised Ann didn't get offered the job. (...Ann wasn't offered the job)

You can use get to say that something happens to somebody or something, especially if this is unplanned or unexpected:

- Our dog got run over by a car.

You can use get only when things happen or change. For example, you cannot use get in these sentences:

- Jill is liked by everybody. (not 'gets liked' - this is not a 'happening')
- He was a mystery man. Nothing was known about him. (not 'got known')

We use get mainly in informal spoken English. You can use be in all situations.

We also use get in the following expressions (which are not passive in meaning):

get married    get divorced

get dressed (= put on your clothes)

get changed (= change your clothes)

## EXERCISES

UNIT  
**43**

43.1 When were they born? Choose five of these people and write a sentence for each. (Two of them were born in the same year.)

Beethoven	Galileo	Elvis Presley	1452	1869	1929
Agatha Christie	Mahatma Gandhi	Leonardo da Vinci	1564	1891	1935
<del>Walt Disney</del>	Martin Luther King	William Shakespeare	1770	<del>1901</del>	

1 Walt Disney was born in 1901.

2 .....

3 .....

4 .....

5 .....

6 .....

7 And you? I .....

43.2 Write these sentences in another way, beginning in the way shown.

1 They didn't give me the money. I wasn't given the money.

2 They asked me some difficult questions at the interview.

I .....

3 Janet's colleagues gave her a present when she retired.

Janet .....

4 Nobody told me that George was ill.

I wasn't .....

5 How much will they pay you?

How much will you .....

6 I think they should have offered Tom the job.

I think Tom .....

7 Has anybody shown you what to do?

Have you .....

43.3 Complete the sentences using being + one of these verbs:

ask attack give invite **keep** pay

1 Mr Miller doesn't like being kept waiting.

2 They went to the party without .....

3 Most people like ..... presents.

4 It's a dangerous city. People won't go out after dark because they are afraid of .....

5 I don't like ..... stupid questions.

6 Few people are prepared to work without .....

43.4 Complete the sentences using get/got + one of these verbs (in the correct form):

ask break damage **hurt** pay steal sting stop use

1 There was a fight at the party but nobody got hurt.

2 Ted ..... by a bee while he was sitting in the garden.

3 How did that window .....?

4 These tennis courts don't ..... very often. Not many people want to play.

5 I used to have a bicycle but it .....

6 Last night I ..... by the police as I was driving home.

7 How much did you ..... last month?

8 Please pack these things very carefully. I don't want them to .....

9 People often want to know what my job is. I often ..... that question.