

## Use of the Passive voice

Passive voice is used when the focus is on the action. It is not important or not known, however, who or what is performing the action.

Example: My bike was stolen.

In the example above, the focus is on the fact that my bike was stolen. I do not know, however, who did it.

Sometimes a statement in passive is more polite than active voice, as the following example shows:

Example: A mistake was made.

## Form of the Passive voice

Subject + finite form of *to be* + Past Participle

Example: A letter was written.

| Tense                    |                 | Subject  | Verb             | Object    |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------|------------------|-----------|
| Present Simple           | <i>Active:</i>  | Rita     | writes           | a letter. |
|                          | <i>Passive:</i> | A letter | is written       | by Rita.  |
| Past Simple              | <i>Active:</i>  | Rita     | wrote            | a letter. |
|                          | <i>Passive:</i> | A letter | was written      | by Rita.  |
| Present Perfect          | <i>Active:</i>  | Rita     | has written      | a letter. |
|                          | <i>Passive:</i> | A letter | has been written | by Rita.  |
| Future simple            | <i>Active:</i>  | Rita     | will write       | a letter. |
|                          | <i>Passive:</i> | A letter | will be written  | by Rita.  |
| Modal verb<br><i>can</i> | <i>Active:</i>  | Rita     | can write        | a letter. |
|                          | <i>Passive:</i> | A letter | can be written   | by Rita.  |

| Tense                |                 | Subject  | Verb              | Object    |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|
| Present<br>continous | <i>Active:</i>  | Rita     | is writing        | a letter. |
|                      | <i>Passive:</i> | A letter | is being written  | by Rita.  |
| Past continous       | <i>Active:</i>  | Rita     | was writing       | a letter. |
|                      | <i>Passive:</i> | A letter | was being written | by Rita.  |
| Past Perfect         | <i>Active:</i>  | Rita     | had written       | a letter. |
|                      | <i>Passive:</i> | A letter | had been written  | by Rita.  |