

# Active and passive verb forms

## Part A – Recap on subject, verb, object: Link each word to its correct definition

Subject

person or thing that the action is done to

Object

an action, or a state of being

Verb

person or thing that does the action

The usual order of these in an English sentence is:

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## Part B – Passive verbs

Here are two sentences. Underline the subject of each sentence.

**Daniel broke his finger.**

**Daniel's finger was broken.**

Sometimes the person or thing that the action is done to appears as the **subject** of the sentence. Then we use a **passive** verb form.

To make a verb passive, use a form of the verb "to be" (*am, are, is, was, were, be*) with the **past participle** of the action verb (*broken, taken, helped, stolen, created, pleased, eaten ...*)

Use the preposition **by** to indicate the person or thing that does the action.

Rewrite each of the following sentences using a passive form of the verb.

1. Greta skilfully milked the cow.
2. The loggers cut down a giant redwood tree.
3. The immune system defends the body from infection.
4. The examiners will carefully mark your papers.
5. A dog bit two children in the park.



Now rewrite these sentences using an **active** form of the verb:

1. Philip was persuaded to come along by Gloria.
2. Drivers who break the speed limit will be caught by automatic cameras.
3. The field was ploughed by the farmer with his blue tractor.

## Part C: What helping verb do we use?

In informal conversation, it's OK to use "get / got" – for example, "It got broken." But in **standard written English**, you **must** use "be / is / are" etc: "It **was** broken."

**Don't use get / got in your writing! (unless it's a character speaking)**

Turn the following sentences into **standard** written English, keeping the passive verbs.

1. Flowers get pollinated by insects.
2. We nearly got caught by the caretaker.
3. Metamorphic rocks get made by getting crushed or heated underground.