

## Passives

### Rule:

We use passives when we focus on the object of the verb or the event or action that has taken place, rather than the subject / person doing it. In medical contexts passives are used often, as when we talk or write the focus is on the patient, rather than the medical personnel who are taking action.

### Example:

Mr Jones *is being discharged*. (the emphasis is on Mr. Jones, not the person who is performing the discharge process)

Mrs Peacock *was prescribed* 100mg of Aspirin daily. (The emphasis is on the patient not the person who prescribed the Aspirin.)

### Formation of passives:

When a passive is formed, the object of the verb goes at the beginning of the sentence. An appropriate form of the verb *be* is used (this changes, according to the tense) and the PAST PARTICIPLE (PP) is added.

#### **be + past participle**

100mg of Aspirin has been ('be' in the present perfect tense) PRESCRIBED (PP of 'prescribe').

Knowledge of irregular past participles is therefore essential for correct passive formation.

### Reference Chart:

TENSE	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
Present Simple	The doctor prescribes Aspirin.	Aspirin <b>is</b> prescribed.
Past Simple	The doctor prescribed Aspirin.	Aspirin <b>was</b> prescribed.
Present Continuous	The doctor is prescribing Aspirin.	Aspirin <b>is being</b> prescribed.
Past Continuous	The doctor was prescribing Aspirin.	Aspirin <b>was being</b> prescribed.
Present Perfect Simple	The doctor has prescribed Aspirin.	Aspirin <b>has been</b> prescribed.
Past Perfect Simple	The doctor has prescribed Aspirin.	Aspirin <b>had been</b> prescribed.
Future Simple	The doctor will prescribe Aspirin.	Aspirin <b>will be</b> prescribed.
Modal verbs (can/may/might)	The doctor may prescribe Aspirin.	Aspirin <b>may be</b> prescribed
Infinitive (to ...)	The doctor needs to prescribe Aspirin.	Aspirin <b>needs to be</b> prescribed.

### Exercise 1: Past Participles

Complete the chart below with the correct past participles. Some are regular and some are irregular.

INFINITIVE	PAST PARTICIPLE	INFINITIVE	PAST PARTICIPLE
administer		dismiss	
tell		require	
damage		discharge	
break	broken	hurt	
admit		infect	
see		disinfect	
use		transfer	
insert		injure	
consult		show	
give		forget	forgotten
monitor		educate	
warn		prescribe	
knock over		reduce	
hit		take	taken
fall	fallen	put on	
stick	stuck	restrict	
slip		drive	
sting		improve	
bite	bitten	recommend	
stop		inform	
replace		advise	
enlarge		offer	
accompany		apply	

## Exercise 2: Forming the passive

Now change the following active sentences into passive sentences. They are in a variety of tenses. Follow this procedure:

1. Underline the object of the sentence
2. Underline the verb
3. Identify the verb tense

ACTIVE	PASSIVE
1. The GP (2.) <u>prescribed</u> (1.) <u>Ms. Walker</u> topical cortisone. – past simple	Ms Walker <b>was prescribed</b> topical cortisone.
2. The community nurse is monitoring Mr. Von Eicken's medication compliance carefully.	
3. We are providing a walking frame for the next two weeks.	
4. Mrs. Mills' family are bringing her in.	
5. Somebody has modified her home and fitted handrails.	
6. The hospital recommended a nursing home placement.	
7. Mr. Jennings requires daily visits and dressing changes.	
8. Somebody must turn Mr. Knights every three hours.	
9. The paramedic told Ms. Hamble to remain calm.	
10. I advised Ms. France to lose weight.	

### NB:

We can also use **have something done** to show that someone provided a service for us. In OET this is often used in to refer to treatment or surgery:

**She had her appendix removed yesterday.**

**Have you ever had your teeth whitened?**

**Need + -ing** can be used as an alternative to the passive, to say that something is necessary to do something without saying who will do it:

**The dressing needs changing daily.**

**Her breathing needs monitoring.**

### Exercise 3: Changing Personal Pronouns

When you change a person's position in the sentence, you need to change the personal pronoun from direct to indirect. Look at the table to below:

DIRECT	INDIRECT
I	Me
You	You
She	Her
He	Him
They	Them
We	Us
It	It

Look at the example, then complete the following exercises.

\*Don't forget to check your choice of tense by looking at the active sentence.

**Example:**

The car hit **him** → **He** was hit by a car.

The doctor has educated **them** → **They** have been educated

1. The hospital is transferring **her** to a hospice.

.....

2. The GP prescribed **him** ibuprofen every 4 hours.

.....

3. A wasp stung **him**.

.....

4. The doctor gave **her** an x-ray this morning.

.....

5. The nurse informed **them** about his medication.

.....

6. Has anybody given **you** a walking frame?

.....

7. A physiotherapist sees **her** regularly.

.....

8. Nobody told **them** that they had to bring identification.

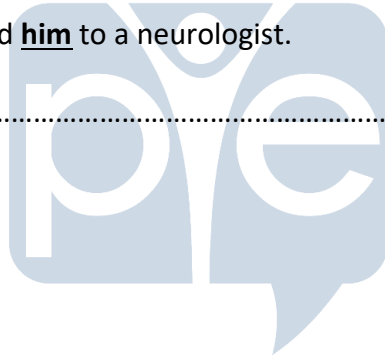
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9. Why didn't anybody tell **me** that our shifts were changing?

.....

10. The doctor has referred **him** to a neurologist.

.....



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**Exercise 4: Adding the subject**

Sometimes it's necessary, helpful or useful to state who or what actions the verb, but often it is not. If you want to include the information, add 'by ...' after the verb

**Example:**

The doctor **has postponed** the procedure because the machine is faulty.  
The procedure **has been postponed** because the machine is faulty.

In this example, it is not important who postponed the procedure, so there is no need include the subject.

A bicycle **hit** Emily.  
Emily **was hit** by a bicycle.

In this example, it would useful to know the subject (what kind of vehicle hit Emily), in order to gain a better picture of the accident, so we use 'by' + subject after the verb.

**Transform the following sentences into passives and add the subject, if necessary:**

1. The nurse will conduct follow-up blood tests.  
.....
2. The doctor admitted the patient for 7 days.  
.....
3. The doctor is discharging Mr. Brown today.  
.....
4. The occupational therapist needs to carry out an assessment.  
.....
5. If necessary, the nurse will administer Paracetamol.  
.....
6. The doctor was treating Mr. MacBeth with 20mg Fluoxetine daily.  
.....
7. The physiotherapist will see her twice a week .  
.....
8. The dentist advised Tom to use a fluoride toothpaste.  
.....

9. The doctor has diagnosed the patient with Type 2 Diabetes.

.....

10. The dentist may need to see him again if the pain does not subside.

.....

**Exercise 5:**

Correct the errors in the following sentences. One sentence is already correct:

1. Mrs. Rivers be discharged today into your care.

.....

2. The patient is recommenced on 100mg Aspirin yesterday.

.....

3. Mr. Hawkins was hospitalised for two weeks.

.....

4. Paracetamol may administered if needed for pain relief.

.....

5. It is important that the patient's BP is carefully monitor.

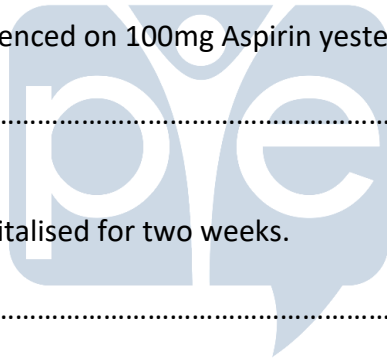
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6. The patient was admitted after being accidentally scald with hot water.

.....

7. The staples need be removed next week.

.....



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8. Modifications to the home have undertaken.

.....

9. No significant improvements has been seen.

.....

10. Mr. Price was advise to cut down on his alcohol intake.

.....



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## **Exercise 6: Selecting The Passive Voice**

We use the passive voice to say *what happens to the subject*. Often, who or what causes the action is unknown or unimportant. Passives are commonly used in OET, because we often need to talk about what happens to a patient and the person who carries out a procedure or treatment is unimportant or irrelevant.

### **Example:**

Mr. Newman's left leg **was fitted** with a plaster

(What happened to Mr. Newman is important but the person who did it is not.)

Passives are used when the verb requires a person or thing to make something happen. It doesn't simply happen.

### **Example:**

Mr. Smith's blood pressure ~~was dropped~~ → Mr. Smith's blood pressure dropped.

The rash on his back ~~was spread~~ → The rash on his back spread.

(A person or thing did not action the verb or make it happen, so a passive is not required.)

In OET, some verbs usually require a passive, because they happen to the patient as opposed to the patient doing them:

### **Example:**

Mr White **was admitted** two days ago – he did not **admit** himself. A doctor admitted him.

Mrs. Coleman is now ready to **be discharged** – the nurse will **discharge** her.

\* In the more unusual cases where patients discharge and admit, we add "self":

"he self-discharged / self-admitted"

Look at the following sentences and decide whether the passive or active has been correctly selected and used:

	✓ or X?
He requires dressings to change daily.	
Mr Hollingsworth is going to discharge now.	
His foot should be elevated and rested.	
She must be encouraged to walk.	
The cream is applying every four hours.	
His temperature was dropped.	
She admitted last Tuesday with a broken pelvis.	
Her blood pressure was monitored by her sister.	
Compression stocking are wearing for the next six weeks.	
He has been educated on the importance of compliance.	

## Passives - answers

### Exercise 1: Past Participles

<b>INFINITIVE</b>	<b>PAST PARTICIPLE</b>	<b>INFINITIVE</b>	<b>PAST PARTICIPLE</b>
administer	administered	dismiss	dismissed
tell	told	require	required
damage	damaged	discharge	discharged
break	broken	hurt	hurt
admit	admitted	infect	infected
see	seen	disinfect	disinfected
use	used	transfer	transferred
insert	inserted	injure	injured
consult	consulted	show	shown
give	given	forget	forgotten
monitor	monitored	educate	educated
warn	warned	prescribe	prescribed
knock over	knocked over	reduce	reduced
hit	hit	take	taken
fall	fallen	put on	put on
stick	stuck	restrict	restricted
slip	slipped	drive	driven
sting	stung	improve	improved
bite	bitten	recommend	recommended
stop	stopped	inform	informed
replace	replaced	advise	advised
enlarge	enlarged	offer	offered
accompany	accompanied	apply	applied

## Exercise 2: Forming the passive

ACTIVE	PASSIVE
1. The GP prescribed Ms. Walker topical cortisone.	1. Mrs. Walker was prescribed topical cortisone.
2. The community nurse is monitoring Mr. Von Eicken's medication compliance carefully.	2. Mr. Von Eicken's medication compliance is being monitored carefully (by the community nurse).
3. We are providing a walking frame for the next two weeks.	3. A walking frame is being provided for the next two weeks.
4. Mrs. Mills' family are bringing her in.	4. Mrs. Mills is being brought in (by her family).
5. Somebody has modified her home and fitted handrails.	5. Her home has been modified and handrails have been fitted.
6. The hospital recommended a nursing home placement.	6. A nursing home placement has been recommended (by the hospital).
7. Mr. Jennings requires daily visits and dressing changes.	7. Daily visits and dressing changes are required.
8. Somebody must turn Mr. Knights every three hours.	8. Mr. Knights must be turned every three hours.
9. The paramedic told Ms. Hamble to remain calm.	9. Ms. Hamble was told to remain calm by the paramedics.
10. I advised Ms. France to lose weight.	10. Ms. France was advised to lose weight.

## Exercise 3: Changing Personal Pronouns

1. She is being transferred to a hospice.
2. He was prescribed ibuprofen every 4 hours.
3. He was stung by a wasp.
4. She was given an x-ray this morning.
5. They were informed about his medication.
6. Have you been given a walking frame?
7. She is seen regularly by a physiotherapist.
8. They were not told that they had to bring identification.
9. Why wasn't I / was I not told that our shifts were changing?
10. He has been referred to a neurologist.

## Exercise 4: Adding the subject

1. Follow-up blood tests will be conducted.
2. She was admitted for 7 days.
3. Mr. Brown is being discharged today.
4. An assessment needs to be carried out by the occupational therapist.

5. Paracetamol will be administered by the nurse, if necessary.
6. Mr. MacBeth was being treated with 20mg Fluoxetine daily.
7. She will be seen twice a week by the physiotherapist.
8. Tom was advised to use flouride toothpaste (by the dentist).
9. He was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes.
10. He may need to be seen again (by the dentist) if the pain doesn't subside

**Exercise 5:**

1. Mrs. Rivers **is being** discharged today into your care.
2. The patient **was** recommenced on 100mg Aspirin yesterday.
3. Mr. Hawkins was hospitalised for two weeks.
4. Paracetamol may **be** administered if needed for pain relief.
5. It is important that the patient's BP is carefully **monitored**.
6. The patient was admitted after being accidentally **scalded** with hot water.
7. The staples need **to** be removed next week.
8. Modifications to the home have **been** undertaken.
9. No significant improvements **have** been seen.
10. Mr. Price was **advised** to cut down on his alcohol intake.

**Exercise 6: Selecting The Passive Voice**

	√ or X?
He requires dressings to change daily.	X
Mr Hollingsworth is going to discharge now.	X
His foot should be elevated and rested.	√
She must be encouraged to walk.	√
The cream is applying every four hours.	X
His temperature was dropped.	X
She admitted last Tuesday with a broken pelvis.	X
Her blood pressure was monitored by her sister.	√
Compression stocking are wearing for the next six weeks.	X
He has been educated on the importance of compliance.	√