

# 06 LANGUAGE SUMMARY

## PASSIVE FORMS

### Passive forms with *be*

- 1 Unlike active sentences, in passive sentences, the subject of the sentences is not the doer of the verb (the agent).  
*Someone stole my purse.* (active)  
(subject)  
*My purse was stolen.* (passive)  
(subject)
- 2 Normally the agent is not included in a passive sentence because it is unimportant or obvious who the agent is, or because we want to avoid saying who is responsible.  
*A man is being interviewed in connection with the attack.*  
*Several people were injured in the explosion.*  
*The relevant documents have been lost.*
  - But if the agent is of particular interest, we use *by*.  
*Paper money was invented by the Chinese.*
- 3 Note the passive of *-ing* forms.  
*Don't you ever worry about being attacked?*  
*He was upset at having been omitted from the final list.*
- 4 The passive infinitive form (without *to*) is often used after modal verbs.  
*There is no limit to what can be achieved.*  
*I very much doubt whether he will be allowed to continue.*  
*I really think he should be given another opportunity.*
- 5 Some verbs are not usually used in the passive form. Some of the most important are:
  - intransitive verbs such as *arrive, happen, come, fall, crash*.  
*He arrived late.* (NOT *was arrived*)
  - state verbs such as *consist, belong, have, seem, be, depend, exist*.  
*The Baltic States consist of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.* (NOT *are consisted of*)
- 6 Some verbs are most often found in common passive phrases.  
*Children aren't allowed to smoke in school.*  
*Some pupils in the school are involved in crime.*  
*We're supposed to hand in our projects today.*  
*I'm not used to late nights any more.*

### Exercise 1, page 134

### Using passive forms

- 1 Normally, the beginning of a sentence tells us what the topic is and new information is added at the end. When the topic of the sentence is not the agent, the passive is used.  
*The Guggenheim Museum in New York was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. It is currently situated in 5th Avenue, but there are plans to move it to Wall Street.* (The topic is the Guggenheim Museum.)  
*Frank Lloyd Wright designed several well-known buildings, including the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo and the Guggenheim Museum in New York. He died in 1959.* (The topic is Frank Lloyd Wright.)

### Exercise 2, page 134

- 2 We often use the passive when we want a style that is impersonal and objective. For this reason, the passive is common in academic writing and newspaper reports.  
*Water is released from the reservoir to the turbine.* (scientific text)  
*Italian singer Martina Barrotti has been cleared of tax evasion in an Italian court.* (newspaper article)
  - The passive is often avoided in less formal contexts (see below).
- 3 The passive is often used with reporting verbs like *believe* and *think*. These constructions are common in formal writing.  
*People believe that Bill Gates is the richest man in the US.* (active)  
*Bill Gates is believed to be the richest man in the US.* (passive)  
*It is believed that Bill Gates is the richest man in the US.* (passive)
  - Other verbs commonly used in this way are: *allege, assume, consider, expect, intend, rumour, know, report, suppose, think, understand*.  
*It is rumoured that the President is about to resign.*  
*The multi-millionaire businessman was alleged to have committed fraud.*  
*It is not yet known whether there are any survivors of the attack.*

### Exercise 3, page 134



## PASSIVE FORMS

- 1 Find and correct the mistakes in the sentences. Look at the words in bold.

- 1 I was terrified – we **could be killed**!
- 2 The cat **was disappeared** one morning and we haven't seen him since.
- 3 I used to **love been given** presents on my birthday. Now it just reminds me how old I am.
- 4 My computer **was crashed** at the weekend, and so I couldn't do my homework.
- 5 Do you think Finlay **should be tell** about his mother's accident?
- 6 He must get tired **of calling** the wrong name all the time.
- 7 You're late. What **was happened**?
- 8 That contract isn't worth the paper **it's write** on.

- 2 Rewrite the encyclopaedia entries so that the topic is at the beginning of each sentence. Change some active forms to passive and some passive forms to active.

1

Audrey Hepburn was a British actress and humanitarian. People know her best as a film actor, and several awards were received by her for her roles. From the mid-1960s more and more of her time was devoted by her to working with disadvantaged people through UNICEF, right up until her death in 1993.

2

Bali is a province of Indonesia, which covers the island of Bali and a few small neighbouring islands. People nickname it 'the Island of the Gods'. It is very popular with tourists and people know it for its highly developed arts. Java and Lombok border it to the west and east.

3

George R. R. Martin is an American fantasy author and screenwriter. People know him best for *A Song of Ice and Fire*, adapted for TV as *Game of Thrones*. More than 20 books have been written by him, as well as a number of screenplays.

4

The Eiffel Tower is a huge iron tower situated on the Champ de Mars in Paris. Engineers working for Gustave Eiffel's engineering company designed it. They erected it in 1889 as the entrance to the World's Fair. It has had many uses since then, and during World War I the French military used the tower to communicate with ships in the Atlantic Ocean. Nowadays the tower is a popular tourist attraction, and seven million people visit it every year.



- 3 Rewrite the sentences in two ways, as in the example.

Everyone knows that the fugitives are in Spain.

a *It is known that the fugitives are in Spain.*

b *The fugitives are known to be in Spain.*

- 1 We understand that the Princess is expecting her first baby.

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

- 2 Organisers expect over 5,000 people to attend the music festival this weekend.

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

- 3 Experts think that Napoleon's recently discovered war diaries are fake.

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

- 4 Some people allege that the CEO embezzled funds in excess of \$900,000.

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

- 5 We have reports that an anonymous telephone buyer paid over \$20 million for the Dalí.

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

- 6 There are rumours that Johnny Depp is among the guests at the film festival.

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

- 4 Complete the headlines with past participles from the box to make them passive in meaning.

fine release arrest find name leave deliver

- 1 **Prisoner** *released* **by accident**
- 2 **Birthday card** \_\_\_\_\_ **ten years late**
- 3 **Finger** \_\_\_\_\_ **in bag of popcorn**
- 4 **Robber's address** \_\_\_\_\_ **at crime scene**
- 5 **Criminal** \_\_\_\_\_ **while reporting stolen car at police station**
- 6 **Woman** \_\_\_\_\_ **\$500 for speeding on her bicycle**
- 7 **Baby** \_\_\_\_\_ **after internet address**