

# PASSIVE VOICE



**The opposite of the passive is Active**

**How to construct passive utterances**

**a- Replace the active verb phrase by the matching passive one.**

**b- Make the object of the active clause the subject of the passive clause.**

**c- Make the subject of the clause the agent of the passive clause.**

**The agent is the noun phrase which occurs after the preposition**

**BY in the passive clause. These changes can be enlightened as follows:**

**The shipowner buys a vessel**

**A vessel is bought by the shipowner**



**The effect of the change into the passive, as you see, is to reverse the positions of the noun phrases acting as subject and object in the active utterances.**

**Except for a few cases, all active utterances with a noun phrase or pronoun can be made passive: He has a vessel, etc.**

**The by-phrase containing the agent of a passive clause is only required in specific cases. In fact, about four out of five English passive clauses have no agent.**

**Rule: TO BE + PP(Past Participle)**



## **I- Simple passive voice**

**Rule: to be + pp**

**a-I buy a ship(av).**

**A ship is bought(pv).**

**b- Someone bought a vessel(av)**

**A vessel was bought(pv).**

**c-People have bought a vessel(av).**

**A vessel has been bought(pv).**

**d- The shipowner had bought a vessel(av)**

**A vessel had been bought by the shipowner(pv).**

## **II- Double passive voice**

**It is understood by double passive voice any verb triggers two objects namely direct**

**and indirect objects: to give, to tell, to send, to lend, to show,  
to offer, to teach, etc.**

**Rule: to be + pp**

**I teach him (Maritime) English(av).**

- He is taught (Maritime) English(pv).**
- (Maritime) English is taught to him(pv).**

### **III- Passive Voice in BE +V-ING utterances**

**Rule: to be +being +pp**

**\*I'm buying a ship(av).**

**A ship is being bought(pv).**

- \* I'm teaching him (Maritime) English(av).**
- He is being taught (Maritime) English(pv).**
- (Maritime) English is being taught to him(pv).**



## IV- Passive Voice with modals

**Rule: modal+ be + pp**

**I can/may/shall/will/must buy a ship(av).**

**A ship can/may/shall/will/must be bought (pv).**

**Note: the translation of “ON” must trigger the use of passive voice.**

**-He is said to be sick (On dit qu’il est malade).**

**-They will be shown round the port(On leur fera visiter le port).**

**-A ship can be bought(On peut acheter un navire).**

