

English B2 · Advanced passive

Upper-intermediate English for Chinese speakers; classroom examples, not official exam items.

The machine learns to dance

B1 built the passive machine; B2 teaches it to dance.

The get-passive

get-passive — informal, dramatic

He got fired. She got promoted.

My phone got stolen. — again?

be-passive — formal, neutral

He was fired. She was promoted.

The safer suit for an exam essay.

Your turn: which suit

Your turn

In a formal exam essay about employment:

- A. He got fired last week.
- B. He was fired last week.
- C. He gotten fired last week.
- D. He got fire last week.

It is said that...

Pattern	Example
It + be + participle + that...	It is believed that the test was hard.
subject + be + participle + to-infinitive	The test is believed to have been hard.
the classic verbs	say, believe, think, know, report, expect, suppose

Use the evidence

It is said that he is a genius. = He is said to be a genius.

Your turn: match the infinitive

Your turn

He is believed ____ early. (He left first; people believe it now.)

- A. to leave
- B. to have left
- C. leaving
- D. left

Two objects, two passives

person-passive — the natural one

They gave me a medal. → I was given a medal.

Speech's first choice.

thing-passive — rarer, formal

A medal was given to me.

Legal, but stiff.

Your turn: the spotlight

Your turn

They told me the news. → the natural passive:

- A. The news was told to me.
- B. I was told the news.
- C. Me was told the news.
- D. I was told by the news.

Every passive needs its be

The chain holds

It said that — impossible. It is said that. — right.

He believed to have left — impossible. He is believed to have left. — right.

Say it aloud

Report responsibly: It is said that the maths test was easy.



Doubt responsibly: It is believed that nobody checked.



She is reported to have finished her homework. Witnesses are sceptical.



I was given a medal for attendance;
I got promoted to medal-collector.

Check yourself

- He got fired last week — informal, sudden, unfortunate.
- It is believed that the test was hard — nobody gets named.
- He is believed to have left early — the infinitive matches the earlier event.
- I was given a medal — the person takes the spotlight.