

FRENCH PASSIVE VOICE



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What is the French Passive Voice?

The French passive voice is used when the subject receives the action instead of doing it.

Active voice:

Les étudiants font l'exposition.

The students make the exhibition.

Passive voice:

L'exposition est faite *par* les étudiants.

The exhibition is made by the students.

How to Form the French Passive Voice

The passive voice is formed with:

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ÊTRE (conjugated in the appropriate tense) + past participle of the main verb.

Optional: par + agent (the person or thing doing the action)

French Passive Voice Examples In Different Tenses

Present Tense

L'exposition est faite *par* les étudiants.

The exhibition is made by the students.

Être in the present + fait (past participle of "faire")

Used for current or habitual actions.

Passé Composé

La décision a été prise *par* le directeur.

The decision was made by the principal.

Avoir in present + été + pris(e)

Used for completed past actions.

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Imparfait

Le gâteau était préparé chaque dimanche *par* ma grand-mère.

The cake was (being) prepared every Sunday by my grandmother.

Être in the imperfect + préparé

Used for repeated or ongoing actions in the past.

Futur Simple

Les devoirs seront corrigés demain *par* le professeur.

The homework will be corrected tomorrow by the teacher.

Être in the future + corrigés

Action that will happen in the future.

Conditionnel Présent

Le projet serait accepté *par* le comité.

The project would be accepted by the committee.

Être in the conditional + accepté

Hypothetical action or condition.

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Plus-que-parfait

Le document avait été signé *par* le maire.

The document had been signed by the mayor.

Avoir in the imperfect + été + signé

Action completed before another past action.

Futur Antérieur

La lettre aura été envoyée avant midi.

The letter will have been sent before noon.

Avoir in the future + été + envoyée

Action that will be completed before another future event.

Subjonctif Présent

Je veux que la vérité soit dite.

I want the truth to be told.

Être in the subjunctive + dit

Used for expressions of desire, doubt, emotion, or necessity.

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Important Notes

Agreement of the Past Participle

In the passive voice, the past participle agrees in gender and number with the subject.

Les lettres sont écrites. (feminine plural)

Le contrat a été signé. (masculine singular)

When to Use the Passive Voice

Use the passive when the agent (doer of the action) is unknown, obvious, or not important. In the following examples, we don't need to say who arrested them:

Le voleur a été arrêté.

The thief was arrested.

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