

Unit 44

Passive (3)

a Some verbs can have two objects. For example **offer**:

They didn't offer **Ann the job**. (the two objects are **Ann** and **the job**)

So it is possible to make two different passive sentences:

- **Ann** wasn't offered the job.
- **The job** wasn't offered to Ann.

It is more usual for the passive sentence to begin with the person.
Other verbs like **offer** which can have two objects are:

- **I was given** two hours to make my decision. (= they gave me two hours)
- **The men were paid** £800 to do the job. (= someone paid the men \$800)
- **Have you been shown** the new machine? (= has anyone shown you the new machine?)

b **Born**: remember that **be born** is a *passive* verb and is usually past:

- **Where were you born?** (*not* 'are you born') || - *past simple*
- **I was born** in Chicago. (*not* 'I am born')
- **How many babies are born** in this hospital every day? - *present simple*

c The passive **-ing** form is **being done/being cleaned** etc.:

Active: I don't like people **telling** me what to do.

Passive: I don't like **being told** what to do.

- I remember **being given** a toy drum on my fifth birthday. (= I remember someone giving me ...)
- **Hurry up!** You know Mr. Miller hates **being kept** waiting. (= he hates people keeping him waiting)
- He climbed over the wall without **being seen**. (= without anyone seeing him)

d Sometimes you can use **get** instead of **be** in the passive:

- There was a fight at the party but nobody **got** hurt. (= nobody was hurt)
- **Did Ann get** offered the job? (= was Ann offered the job?)

You can use **get** in the passive to say that something happens to someone or something. Often the actions is not planned; it happens by chance:

- The dog **got** run over by a car. (= the dog was run over)

In other types of situation **get** is not usually possible:

- George **is** liked by everyone. (*not* 'gets liked')

Get is used mainly in informal spoken English. You can use **be** in all situations.

Active: I don't like people **telling** me what to do.