

Lesson Plan: Advanced passive structures

Level: Advanced (B2–C1)

Time: 60–90 minutes

Topic: Advanced passive structures: emphasis, style, and nuance

Skills: Grammar, reading, writing, speaking

Focus: Form, meaning, and use of advanced passive constructions

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Use advanced passive forms accurately and appropriately
- Recognize when passive voice is preferred over active
- Use passive structures for formality, emphasis, and objectivity
- Produce academic or professional-style sentences using passives

Breakdown of sub-topics

- Passive with reporting verbs

It is believed that... / He is said to have...

- Passive with modal verbs

The issue must be addressed.

- Passive infinitives and gerunds

The report needs to be revised.

She dislikes being interrupted.

- Get-passive (contrast with be-passive)

He got promoted last year.

- Passive with complex objects

They were allowed to leave early.

- Causative passive

The system was designed to improve efficiency.

1. Warm-up (10 minutes)

Activity: "Active or passive — and why?"

Write these sentences on the board:

1. *Someone leaked the information.*
2. *The information was leaked.*
3. *It is alleged that mistakes were made.*

Students discuss in pairs:

- Which sentence sounds more formal?
- Which one hides the agent?
- Where might each sentence be used? (news, academic writing, conversation)

Feedback:

Elicit that passive voice is used for **objectivity, emphasis on result, or unknown/unimportant agents**.

2. Presentation (15–20 minutes)

A. Review of passive purpose

Briefly review:

- Focus on **action/result**, not the doer
- Common in **academic, news, formal, and professional contexts**

B. Introduce advanced structures (with examples)

1. Reporting passives

- *It is widely believed that climate policies will change.*
- *The minister is said to have resigned.*

(Emphasizes distance, neutrality, or uncertainty)

2. **Passive with modals**

- *Immediate action must be taken.*
- *The policy could be revised.*

3. **Passive infinitives & gerunds**

- *The report needs to be rewritten.*
- *He avoided being questioned.*

4. **Get-passive**

- *She got promoted.* (more informal, often unexpected or personal)

5. **Causative passive**

- *The software was developed to reduce errors.*

3. **Controlled practice (15 minutes)**

Activity 1: Sentence transformation

Students rewrite sentences using the passive.

Example:

- *People believe the company falsified records.*
→ *The company is believed to have falsified records.*
- *The manager must solve the problem.*
→ *The problem must be solved.*

Check answers together and discuss **why** the passive sounds better in each case.

4. **Semi-controlled practice (15 minutes)**

Activity 2: Choose the best form

Students choose the most appropriate structure (active, passive, or reporting passive).

Example:

- (News report)

It _____ (say) that new regulations will be introduced.

Students justify their choices.

5. Communicative practice (15–20 minutes)

Activity 3: Formal context role task

Students work in small groups and choose one context:

- News report
- Academic article
- Company announcement

They write **5–6 sentences** using at least **4 different passive structures**.

Example prompts:

- A policy change
- A scientific discovery
- A workplace decision

Groups present their sentences orally.

6. Error correction & feedback (10 minutes)

- Board common errors (e.g., missing "be," wrong participle, overuse of passive)
- Elicit corrections from students
- Highlight **overuse warning**: passive is powerful but should be purposeful

7. Wrap-up & reflection (5 minutes)

Ask students:

- When is passive better than active?
- Which passive structure felt most natural?
- Which is most common in academic or professional writing?

Optional homework

Choose one:

- Rewrite a short article paragraph using advanced passive forms
- Write a formal email or report using at least **5 passive structures**
- Convert a short active text into a more formal, passive version

Extension/differentiation

- **Stronger students:** Analyze authentic news or academic texts
- **Support students:** Provide sentence frames
- **Exam prep:** Focus on reporting passives and modal passives