

Lesson Plan: Passive voice with modals

Level: Intermediate (B1–B1+)

Time: 60 minutes

Objectives

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

- Recognize and form **passive sentences with modals**
- Use passive modals to talk about **rules, obligations, advice, and possibilities**
- Choose passive forms when the **doer is unknown, unimportant, or obvious**

Target Language

Active vs passive with modals

Active:

- You must wear a helmet.

Passive:

- A helmet must be worn.

Form

Modal + be + past participle

Examples: must be done, should be finished, can be recycled, might be delayed

Common modals used in the passive

Modal	Use	Example
must	obligation / rule	Passports must be shown.
should	advice	This problem should be checked.
can	possibility / ability	Tickets can be bought online.
may / might	possibility	The meeting might be cancelled.

Materials

- Whiteboard or slides
- Worksheet or handout (optional)
- Signs / notices (optional pictures)

Lesson procedure

1. Warm-up (5–8 minutes)

Activity: Signs and rules

Write or show signs/notices:

- No smoking
- Return books on time
- Wear protective glasses

Ask:

- Who must do these things?
- Is the person important?

Elicit passive versions:

- Smoking must not be allowed.
- Books must be returned on time.
- Protective glasses must be worn.

2. Presentation (10 minutes)

Step 1: Meaning

Write two sentences:

- You must submit the form by Friday.
- The form must be submitted by Friday.

Ask CCQs:

- Do we know who submits the form? (No)
- Is it important? (No)
- Is this a rule? (Yes)

Highlight that passive is used when:

- The action is more important than the person
- The person is unknown or obvious

Step 2: Form

Board the structure clearly:

Modal + be + past participle

Underline:

- must **be** completed
- can **be** repaired
- should **be** cleaned

Contrast with incorrect forms:

- ✗ must completed
- ✗ must be complete

3. Controlled practice (10–12 minutes)

Activity: Complete the sentence

Students choose the correct form:

1. The test must ____ (finish) by 10 a.m.
2. This package should ____ (send) today.
3. The tickets can ____ (buy) online.
4. The meeting might ____ (cancel).

Answers:

1. be finished, 2. be sent, 3. be bought, 4. be cancelled

4. Semi-controlled practice (10 minutes)

Activity: active → passive

Students rewrite sentences:

1. You must clean the room.
2. They should check the report.
3. People can recycle these bottles.
4. Someone might delay the flight.

Possible answers:

- The room must be cleaned.
- The report should be checked.
- These bottles can be recycled.
- The flight might be delayed.

5. Communicative practice (10–15 minutes)

Activity: Create the rules

In pairs or small groups, students imagine:

- A school
- A museum
- A factory
- A spaceship

They write and share rules using passive modals:

- Mobile phones must be turned off.
- Safety instructions must be followed.
- Food should not be brought inside.

6. Error correction & feedback (5 minutes)

- Write common errors on the board:

✗ must be wear

✗ should been cleaned

- Elicit corrections:

✓ must be worn

✓ should be cleaned

Common errors to watch for

- Forgetting **be** after the modal
- Using the wrong past participle
- Using active when passive is more natural

Optional homework

- Rewrite 8 active sentences into passive
- Write rules for a place using at least 5 modal passives
- Find 3 real-life signs and rewrite them using passive modals