

## REPORTED AND IMPERSONAL PASSIVE

With opinion verbs such as *allege, believe, consider, estimate, expect, know, report, say, think, understand* a passive construction is used when reporting people's generalized opinions.

This happens because the action referred to is more important than the subject who is doing the action, usually because it would be a weak subject (they, people).

You can build this kind of sentences following both these structures:

### IT + PASSIVE OPINION VERB + THAT CLAUSE

### PERSONAL SUBJECT + PASSIVE OPINION VERB + TO INFINITIVE

Depending on the tense reference in the active sentence, the infinitive may vary into perfect infinitive (to have + pp), present continuous infinitive (to be + -ing form), perfect continuous infinitive (to have been + -ing form), or perfect passive infinitive (to have been + pp).

#### 1. PRESENT REFERENCE

People say that Sam **is** in the UK.

*It is said that Sam **is** in the UK.*

*Sam is said **to be** in the UK.*

#### 2. PAST REFERENCE

People know that Shane **left** Galway last week.

*It is known that Shane **left** Galway last week.*

*Shane is known **to have left** Galway last week.*

#### 3. CONTINUOUS PRESENT/PAST REFERENCE

People rumour that George **is / was visiting** his relatives.

*It is rumoured that George **is / was visiting** his relatives.*

*George is rumoured **to be visiting / to have been visiting** his relatives.*

#### 4. PASSIVE REFERENCE

People consider that Jane **was badly mistreated**.

*It is considered that Jane **was badly mistreated**.*

*Jane is considered **to have been badly mistreated**.*

### ALSO KEEP IN MIND

- ★ If the reporting or opinion verb is in the past in the active sentence, it stays the same in the passive sentence:

*People **thought** she had paid too much.*

*It **was thought** that she had paid too much.*

*She **was thought** to have paid too much.*

- ★ If the verb clause in the second part of the sentence contains a modal, or a verb form which does not have an infinitive form, you will have to use an alternative equivalent which can become an infinitive.

Can/could	forms of to be able to
Will	forms of to be going to
Must	forms of to have to

## PRACTICE

### EXERCISE 1

Rewrite these sentences using the introductory words given, and one of the constructions above.

1. We know that customs officials confiscated ten foreign passports last week.  
Ten foreign passports \_\_\_\_\_
2. People say that most small corner shops are losing business with the recession.  
Most small corner shops \_\_\_\_\_
3. It is expected that tax increases will be announced in tomorrow's budget.  
Tax increases \_\_\_\_\_
4. People thought at first that the Crown Prince had been attacked.  
The Crown Prince \_\_\_\_\_
5. We know that inner-city crime rates are increasing.  
Inner-city crime rates \_\_\_\_\_
6. They say the star's wife has had at least two face-lifts.  
The star's wife \_\_\_\_\_
7. It is rumoured that the Princess is in hiding in Balmoral Castle in Scotland.  
The Princess \_\_\_\_\_
8. It is feared that nine crew members were lost overboard.  
Nine crew members \_\_\_\_\_
9. It was considered that his speech was one of the best.  
His speech \_\_\_\_\_
10. We can't deny that we made certain mistakes early on.  
It \_\_\_\_\_
11. Police reported that a man had been helping them with their investigation.  
A man \_\_\_\_\_
12. The accused was alleged to have committed fraud.  
It \_\_\_\_\_



**EXERCISE 2**

Rewrite each sentence so that it contains the word in capitals.

1. We believe that the government has prepared a plan. HAVE  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. We are thinking of getting someone to paint the outside of the house. PAINTED  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. In the end I was unable to find a garage to service my car. GET  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. People say that Mrs Turner was having business difficulties. BEEN  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The treasure is thought to date from the 13th century. IT  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. The police towed away Alan's car. GOT  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Your hair needs cutting. GET  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. The police believe that a professional thief stole the statue. BEEN  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Jill's parents are making her study hard. MADE  
\_\_\_\_\_