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Grammar Reference

Construction of the passive

The passive exists in every tense. The **passive voice** is formed as follows:

- **be** (conjugated) + **past participle**

'**By**' is used to introduce the person or the object that **does the action**.

Example:

A worm **is being eaten by** the bird.

(Active sentence: The bird **is eating** a worm.)

The church **was built in** 1654.

(Active sentence: People built the church in 1654.)

My brother **is punished by** the teacher.

(Active sentence: The teacher **punishes** my brother.)

- **get** + **past participle**

'**Get**' is used to express:

- the **passage** from one state of being to another.

Example:

They'll **get married** in two months.

- an idea of some **effort** being undertaken.

Example:

We'll try to **get** ourselves **invited**.

The sequence of tenses

The **sequence of tenses** is constructed as follows:

- in **indirect speech**: when the verb of the **main clause** is a verb expressing opinion or a declaration (to think, to say, to tell...). In the **simple present** or in the **preterite**, the verb of the dependent clause is conjugated as follows:

Main	Dependent
present	present <i>or</i> future <i>or</i> present perfect
preterite	preterite <i>or</i> conditional <i>or</i> past perfect

Example:

Main	Dependent	Dependent - clause tense
He says	it doesn't matter.	present
He said	it didn't matter.	preterite
I think	it will be fun.	future
We thought	it would rain.	conditional
I know	you've tried .	present perfect
I knew	you had tried .	past perfect

- with **dependent clauses** introduced by **that** or a **relative pronoun**: when the **main clause** is in the **preterite**, the verb of the dependent clause is conjugated normally in the **preterite**.

Example:

We **were** the ones **who did** it.

It **was** on Saturday **that it happened** to him.

Note. When **that** is used in **indirect speech**, the dependent verb **follows the rule** of **agreement** of indirect speech (it doesn't necessarily have to be in the preterite).

'When,' 'while' + present

The **verbs** of **dependent clauses of time** introduced by **conjunctions of time** (after, as soon as, as long as, as much as, before, once, until, when, whenever, wherever, while...) are always in the **simple present** when the verb of the **main clause** is in the **future**.

Example:

They'**ll eat as soon as** they **arrive**.

Before we **leave**, we'**ll help** with the cleaning.

When I **come** back, I'**ll call** you.