

Impersonal passive / nominalisation

Lesson plan

Topic: Academic passive structures / nominalisation (changing verbs to nouns)

Rationale: This lesson introduces complex grammar structures to help students be more formal and academic in their writing.

Procedure

1. Discuss the basics of the passive – what is the passive? Passive structure? Uses?

See: www.academic-englishuk.com/passive-grammar-basics

2. Write or show this sentence:

They report the defence minister is to resign

3. Ask students to rewrite the sentence without using ‘they’ – put responses on board
4. Go through these three forms – highlighting key changes:

It is reported that the defence minister is to resign

Explain structure: It is said that.... [It + passive verb (be + past participle) + that clause]

A common way of reporting what is said by people or by an unspecified group of people

Nominalised: *There is **a report** that the defence minister is to resign*

Nominalised: ***One report is*** that the defence minister is to resign

5. Write or show this sentence and ask students to create the three structures

They have suggested the lack of funding is part of the problem

6. Feedback answers ([answers on the sheet](#))

7. Now introduce the ‘to-infinitive passive form’

The subject + passive verb (be+past participle) + to infinitive

8. Provide an example

They claim the terrorist is living abroad

It is claimed that the terrorist is living abroad

The terrorist is claimed to be living abroad

9. Write or show this sentence and ask students to create the four structures:

They alleged that three hundred people died in the plane crash ([answers on sheet](#))

10. Give out worksheet – do questions 1&2 together then students work through and teacher monitors / guides.

<p>Copyright: These materials are photocopiable but please leave all logos and web addresses on handouts. Please don't post these materials onto the web. Thank you</p>
--

Impersonal passive / nominalisation

It is said that.... [It + passive verb (be + past participle) + that clause]

A common way of reporting what is said by people or by an unspecified group of people

They report the defence minister is to resign

It is reported that the defence minister is to resign

Nominalised: There is a report that the defence minister is to resign

Nominalised: One report is that the defence minister is to resign

They have suggested the lack of funding is part of the problem

It has been suggested that the lack of funding is part of the problem

Nominalised: There has been a suggestion that the lack of funding is part of the problem

Nominalised: One/a suggestion has been (given) that the lack of funding is part of the problem

To infinitive impersonal passives

The subject + passive verb (be+past participle) + to infinitive

They claim the terrorist is living abroad

It is claimed that the terrorist is living abroad

The terrorist is claimed to be living abroad

Nominalised: There is a claim that the terrorist is living abroad

Nominalised: One / a claim is that the terrorist is living abroad

They alleged that three hundred people died in the plane crash

It was alleged that three hundred people died in the plane crash

Three hundred people were alleged to have died in the plane crash

There was an allegation that three hundred people died in the plane crash

One allegation was that three hundred people died in the plane crash

Common verbs: agree / allege / announce / assume / believe / calculate / claim / consider / declare / discover / estimate / expect / find / known / mention / propose / recommend / rumour / show / suppose / suggest / understand

Practice:

1. People believe the company stole over a million pounds

It _____

The company _____

There _____

One _____

2. We expect the train strike will begin tomorrow

It _____
The Train Strike _____
There _____
One _____

3. We discovered the student had plagiarised

It _____
The Student _____
There _____
One _____

4. A HSBC spokesperson has announced that HSBC are relocating to Hong Kong

It _____
An _____
There _____

5. Many people perceive that the government is responsible for the accident

It _____
The Government _____
A _____
There _____

6. The newspapers are claiming that it will be the hottest day next week

It _____
Next week _____
A _____
There _____

7. The company has announced it will cut two hundred jobs next month

It _____
An _____
There _____

8. Many people had assumed that the Government would increase taxes

9. Many books on the subject of migration suggest that it is worldwide phenomenon

10. Everybody understands that education is the key to a brighter future

Answers Practice:

1. People believe the company stole over a million pounds

It is believed that the company stole over a million pounds
The company is believed to have stolen over a million pounds
There is a belief that the company stole over a million pounds
One belief is that the company stole over a million pounds

2. We expect the train strike will begin tomorrow

It is expected that the train strike will begin tomorrow
The Train Strike is expected to begin tomorrow
There is an expectation that the train strike will begin tomorrow
One expectation is that the train strike will begin tomorrow

3. We discovered the student had plagiarised

It was discovered that the student had plagiarised
The Student was discovered to have plagiarised
There was a discovery that the student had plagiarised
One discovery was that the student had plagiarised

4. A HSBC spokesperson has announced that HSBC are relocating to Hong Kong

It has been announced that HSBC are relocating to Hong Kong
An announcement has been made that HSBC are relocating to Hong Kong
There has been an announcement that HSBC are relocating to Hong Kong

5. Many people perceive that the government is responsible for the accident

It is perceived that the government is responsible for the accident
The Government is perceived to be responsible for the accident
A perception is that the government is responsible for the accident
There is a perception that the government is responsible for the accident

6. The newspapers are claiming that it will be the hottest day next week

It is being claimed that it will be the hottest day next week
Next week is being claimed to be the hottest day next week
A claim is being made that it will be the hottest day next week
There is a claim being made that it will be the hottest day next week

7. The company has announced it will cut two hundred jobs next month

It has been announced that the company will cut two hundred jobs next month
An announcement has been made to cut two hundred jobs next month (by the company)
There has been an announcement (by the company) to cut two hundred jobs next month

8. Many people had assumed that the Government would increase taxes

It had been assumed that the Government would increase taxes

An assumption had been made that the Government would increase taxes

There had been an assumption that the Government would increase taxes

9. Many books on the subject of migration suggest that it is a worldwide phenomenon

It is suggested (by many books) that migration is a worldwide phenomenon

Migration is suggested to be a worldwide phenomenon

There is a suggestion that migration is worldwide phenomenon

One suggestion is that migration is worldwide phenomenon

10. Everybody understands that education is the key to a brighter future

It is understood that education is the key to a brighter future

Education is understood to be the key to a brighter future

There is an understanding that education is the key to a brighter future

One understanding is that education is the key to a brighter future