

Passive: Perfect Tenses

Grammar Lesson, Examples & 30 Practice Questions

Passive: Perfect Tenses

In English, we usually say **who** does something. For example: "*Someone has cleaned the room.*" But sometimes, we do not know who did it, or it is not important. In this case, we use the **passive voice**.

In this lesson, we will look at the **passive in perfect tenses** — specifically the **present perfect passive** and the **past perfect passive**. These are very useful for talking about things that **have been done** or **had been done** at some point in time.

Let's start with a simple example:

Active: Someone has painted the house.

Passive: The house **has been painted**.

We do not need to say *who* painted it. The focus is on the house and the action — it is done!

What Is the Passive Voice?

In a normal (active) sentence, the subject **does** the action:

Maria has cooked the dinner. → Maria is the subject. She did the action.

In a passive sentence, the subject **receives** the action:

The dinner has been cooked. → The dinner received the action. We do not say who cooked it.

The passive voice is helpful when:

- We do not know who did something.
- It is not important who did something.
- We want to focus on the thing that was done, not the person who did it.

Rule Breakdown: Present Perfect Passive

The **present perfect passive** is used when something was done at some point before now, and the result is still important in the present. We often use it with words like *just, already, yet, recently*.

Example: "*The car has been repaired.*" → Someone repaired it recently, and now it works!

How to Form the Present Perfect Passive

Subject + has/have + been + past participle

The **past participle** is the third form of a verb. For example:

- clean → cleaned
- write → written
- eat → eaten
- make → made
- break → broken

Use **has** with: he, she, it (and singular nouns)

Use **have** with: I, you, we, they (and plural nouns)

Positive Sentences

Subject + has/have + been + past participle

Subject	has / have	been	Past Participle	Full Sentence
The letter	has	been	sent	The letter has been sent.
The windows	have	been	cleaned	The windows have been cleaned.
The cake	has	been	eaten	The cake has been eaten.
The tickets	have	been	booked	The tickets have been booked.
The door	has	been	locked	The door has been locked.

Negative Sentences

Subject + has/have + not + been + past participle

To make a negative sentence, add **not** after *has* or *have*.

Subject	has/have + not	been	Past Participle	Full Sentence
The homework	has not (hasn't)	been	finished	The homework has not been finished.
The emails	have not (haven't)	been	read	The emails have not been read.
The report	has not (hasn't)	been	written	The report has not been written.

Questions

Has/Have + subject + been + past participle?

To make a question, move *has* or *have* to the **beginning** of the sentence.

Has / Have	Subject	been	Past Participle	Full Question
Has	the car	been	fixed	Has the car been fixed?

Has / Have	Subject	been	Past Participle	Full Question
Have	the bags	been	packed	Have the bags been packed?
Has	dinner	been	made	Has dinner been made?

Rule Breakdown: Past Perfect Passive

The **past perfect passive** is used when something was done before a certain point in the past. It helps us talk about two events in the past — and show that one happened **first**.

Think of this little story:

When Tom arrived at the party, all the food had already been eaten. He was very hungry!

The food was eaten **before** Tom arrived. So we use the past perfect passive: *had been eaten*.

How to Form the Past Perfect Passive

Subject + had + been + past participle

We use **had** with *all* subjects — I, you, he, she, it, we, they.

Positive Sentences

Subject	had	been	Past Participle	Full Sentence
The letter	had	been	sent	The letter had been sent before noon.
The room	had	been	cleaned	The room had been cleaned before the guests arrived.
The tickets	had	been	sold	All the tickets had been sold.
The cake	had	been	made	The cake had been made by the time she arrived.

Negative Sentences

Subject + had + not + been + past participle

Subject	had not	been	Past Participle	Full Sentence
The work	had not (hadn't)	been	finished	The work had not been finished when he left.
The door	had not (hadn't)	been	locked	The door had not been locked.

Questions

Had + subject + been + past participle?

Had	Subject	been	Past Participle	Full Question
Had	the report	been	sent	Had the report been sent before the meeting?
Had	the food	been	prepared	Had the food been prepared?

Using "by" to Say Who Did the Action

Sometimes we want to say **who** did the action, even in a passive sentence. We use the word **by** for this.

Subject + has/have/had + been + past participle + by + person

Examples:

- The book has been written **by a famous author**.
- The windows had been broken **by the children**.
- The letter has been signed **by the manager**.
- The song had been sung **by a young girl**.

Remember: if who did the action is not important or not known, you do not need to use *by*.

Present Perfect Passive vs Past Perfect Passive

It can be difficult to know when to use the **present perfect passive** or the **past perfect passive**. Here is a simple guide:

Tense	Form	When to Use	Example
Present Perfect Passive	has/have + been + past participle	Something was done before now, and the result is important now.	The room has been cleaned. (It is clean now!)
Past Perfect Passive	had + been + past participle	Something was done before another action or time in the past.	The room had been cleaned before they arrived.

Comparing the Two Tenses

Look at these two sentences:

Present Perfect Passive: **The door has been locked.**

→ I am looking at the door now. It is locked. Someone locked it recently.

Past Perfect Passive: **The door had been locked when the fire started.**

→ First, someone locked the door. Then, later, the fire started. The locking happened first, in the past.

Regular and Irregular Past Participles

To use the passive correctly, you need to know the **past participle** of the verb. Here are some common examples:

Regular Verbs (add -ed)

Verb	Past Participle	Example (Present Perfect Passive)
clean	cleaned	The kitchen has been cleaned.
book	booked	The hotel has been booked.
finish	finished	The project has been finished.
repair	repaired	The bike has been repaired.
lock	locked	The car has been locked.

Irregular Verbs (different forms — must be learnt!)

Verb	Past Participle	Example (Past Perfect Passive)
eat	eaten	All the food had been eaten.
write	written	The letter had been written.
break	broken	The window had been broken.
make	made	The decision had been made.
steal	stolen	The money had been stolen.
send	sent	The parcel had been sent.
sell	sold	The house had been sold.
give	given	The prize had been given.

Important Differences: Active vs Passive Perfect Tenses

Here is a clear comparison between active and passive sentences in perfect tenses. This will help you see the difference:

Active	Passive
Someone has repaired the car.	The car has been repaired.
They have finished the project.	The project has been finished.
A chef had made the dinner.	The dinner had been made by a chef.

Active	Passive
Someone had stolen his bike.	His bike had been stolen.
She has written the email.	The email has been written.

Common Mistakes

Here are some mistakes that learners often make with the **passive in perfect tenses**. Check you do not make the same errors!

- ✗ The car has been repair.
- ✓ **The car has been repaired.** (Use the past participle, not the base form.)
- ✗ The letter have been sent.
- ✓ **The letter has been sent.** (Use *has* with a singular noun, not *have*.)
- ✗ The windows has been cleaned.
- ✓ **The windows have been cleaned.** (Use *have* with a plural noun, not *has*.)
- ✗ The food had been eat before we arrived.
- ✓ **The food had been eaten before we arrived.** (Use the correct past participle: *eat* → *eaten*.)
- ✗ Has the room been cleaning?
- ✓ **Has the room been cleaned?** (Use the past participle, not the -ing form.)
- ✗ The report has been written by he.
- ✓ **The report has been written by him.** (After *by*, use object pronouns: *him*, *her*, *them*, *us*.)
- ✗ The tickets had been sell.
- ✓ **The tickets had been sold.** (The past participle of *sell* is *sold*, not *sell*.)

Contractions in Passive Perfect Tenses

In everyday spoken English, we often use **contractions** (short forms). Here are the most common ones for the passive perfect tenses:

Full Form	Contraction	Example
has not	hasn't	The work hasn't been done.
have not	haven't	The letters haven't been sent.
had not	hadn't	The room hadn't been cleaned.

In formal writing (e.g. emails, reports, school work), it is better to use the **full forms**: *has not*, *have not*, *had not*.

More Examples in Context

Here are some short, everyday situations using the passive in perfect tenses. Read them carefully to help you understand when to use these forms naturally.

Situation 1: You walk into the kitchen and see that it is very tidy.

→ *Wow! The kitchen **has been cleaned**. It looks great!*

Situation 2: You are late for the concert. You try to buy a ticket.

→ *Sorry! All the tickets **have been sold**. There are no more left.*

Situation 3: You tell a friend about a problem at school last week.

→ *When the teacher arrived, the homework **had not been done**. We were in trouble!*

Situation 4: You ask about your phone at the repair shop.

→ ***Has my phone been fixed** yet?*

→ *Yes, it **has been repaired**. You can collect it now.*

Situation 5: A friend tells you about a house fire.

→ *By the time the fire started, all the documents **had been saved**. Nobody lost their important papers.*

Passive: Perfect Tenses — Quick Summary

Let's look at the key points from this lesson:

- The **passive voice** is used when the action is more important than who did it.
- The **present perfect passive** = **has/have + been + past participle**. Use it when something was done before now and the result is still important.
- The **past perfect passive** = **had + been + past participle**. Use it when something was done before another point or action in the past.
- Use **has** with singular subjects (he, she, it, the car, the letter...)
- Use **have** with plural subjects or I, you, we, they.
- Use **had** for *all* subjects in the past perfect passive.
- Use **by + person** if you want to say who did the action.
- Always use the correct **past participle** — watch out for irregular verbs!

Tense	Structure	Example
Present Perfect Passive (positive)	has/have + been + past participle	The cake has been eaten.
Present Perfect Passive (negative)	has/have + not + been + past participle	The email has not been sent.
Present Perfect Passive (question)	Has/Have + subject + been + past participle?	Has the room been cleaned?
Past Perfect Passive (positive)	had + been + past participle	The tickets had been sold.

Tense	Structure	Example
Past Perfect Passive (negative)	had + not + been + past participle	The work had not been finished.
Past Perfect Passive (question)	Had + subject + been + past participle?	Had the door been locked?

Now practise **passive perfect tenses** in the exercises below.

Passive: Perfect Tenses – Practice Test

A2 | 30 Questions: Multiple Choice, Fill-in-the-Gap & Fill-in-the-Blank

Part 1: Multiple Choice (Questions 1–10)

1 The letter ____ already been sent by the secretary.

- A** have
- B** has
- C** had
- D** is

2 The windows ____ been cleaned this morning.

- A** has
- B** have
- C** had
- D** was

3 By the time we arrived, all the food ____ been eaten.

- A** has
- B** have
- C** had
- D** were

4 The cake has been ____ by my mother.

- A** make
- B** made
- C** making
- D** makes

5 The books had been ____ before the students came.

- A** distribute
- B** distributes
- C** distributing
- D** distributed

6 Has the report ____ written yet?

- A** be
- B** being
- C** been
- D** was

7 My phone ____ been repaired by the technician.

- A** have
- B** had
- C** has
- D** were

8 The prizes ____ been given to the winners by the time we arrived.

- A** has
- B** have
- C** had
- D** is

9 The new school has been ____ in our town.

- A** build
- B** built
- C** building
- D** builds

10 The homework had not been ____ before class started.

- A** finish
- B** finished
- C** finishing
- D** finishes

Part 2: Fill in the Gap (Questions 11–20)

11 The windows ____ already been cleaned by the janitor.

- A** have
- B** has
- C** had

12 The cake ____ been eaten by the children.

- A** has
- B** have
- C** had

13 The letter ____ been sent before the meeting started.

- A** had
- B** has
- C** have

14 All the tickets ____ been sold by noon.

- A** had
- B** have
- C** has

15 The homework ____ been finished by the students.

- A** has
- B** have
- C** had

16 The books ____ been returned to the library.

- A** have
- B** has
- C** had

17 The new school ____ been built in our town.

- A** has
- B** have
- C** had

18 The dog ____ been fed twice today.

- A** has
- B** have
- C** had

19 The prizes ____ been given out before I arrived.

- A** had
- B** has
- C** have

20 The emails ____ been read by everyone in the office.

- A** have
- B** has
- C** had

Part 3: Fill in the Blank (Questions 21–30)

21 The room _____ by the hotel staff this morning.

22 The letters _____ to all the students already.

23 The cake _____ by the children.

24 My car _____ at the garage. It looks great now!

25 The windows _____ — we need to call someone.

26 Has the homework _____ by the students yet?

27 The new park _____ in our neighbourhood. It opened last week.

28 All the tickets _____ — there are no more available.

29 The dog _____ by my brother, so you don't need to do it.

30 The emails _____ by the manager yet.

Answer Key & Explanations

Passive: Perfect Tenses | A2

Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. **B** Correct Answer: has ✓ Explanation: We use has been + past participle for the present perfect passive with a singular subject like the letter. The letter has been sent.
2. **B** Correct Answer: have ✓ Explanation: We use have been + past participle for the present perfect passive with a plural subject like the windows. The windows have been cleaned.
3. **C** Correct Answer: had ✓ Explanation: We use had been + past participle for the past perfect passive. This shows something finished before another past action. All the food had been eaten before we arrived.
4. **B** Correct Answer: made ✓ Explanation: In the present perfect passive, we use has/have been + past participle. The past participle of make is made. The cake has been made.
5. **D** Correct Answer: distributed ✓ Explanation: In the past perfect passive, we use had been + past participle. The past participle of distribute is distributed. The books had been distributed.
6. **C** Correct Answer: been ✓ Explanation: In the present perfect passive, we use has/have + been + past participle. The word been is always needed between has/have and the past participle. Has the report been written?
7. **C** Correct Answer: has ✓ Explanation: We use has been + past participle for a singular subject like my phone in the present perfect passive. My phone has been repaired.
8. **C** Correct Answer: had ✓ Explanation: We use had been + past participle for the past perfect passive. The phrase by the time we arrived tells us the action happened before another past action. The prizes had been given.
9. **B** Correct Answer: built ✓ Explanation: In the present perfect passive, we use has been + past participle. The past participle of build is built. The new school has been built.
10. **B** Correct Answer: finished ✓ Explanation: In the past perfect passive negative, we use had not been + past participle. The past participle of finish is finished. The homework had not been finished.

Part 2: Fill in the Gap

11. **A** Correct Answer: have ✓ Explanation: The windows is plural, so we use have in the present perfect passive. The structure is have/has + been + past participle. The windows have already been cleaned.
12. **A** Correct Answer: has ✓ Explanation: The cake is singular, so we use has in the present perfect passive. The structure is has + been + past participle. The cake has been eaten.

13. **A** Correct Answer: had ✓ Explanation: We use the past perfect passive here because the action happened before another past event. The structure is had + been + past participle. The letter had been sent before the meeting.
14. **A** Correct Answer: had ✓ Explanation: We use past perfect passive because the tickets were sold before a specific past time (noon). The structure is had + been + past participle. All the tickets had been sold by noon.
15. **A** Correct Answer: has ✓ Explanation: The homework is singular, so we use has in the present perfect passive. The structure is has + been + past participle. The homework has been finished.
16. **A** Correct Answer: have ✓ Explanation: The books is plural, so we use have in the present perfect passive. The structure is have + been + past participle. The books have been returned.
17. **A** Correct Answer: has ✓ Explanation: The new school is singular, so we use has in the present perfect passive. The structure is has + been + past participle. The new school has been built.
18. **A** Correct Answer: has ✓ Explanation: The dog is singular, so we use has in the present perfect passive. The structure is has + been + past participle. The dog has been fed twice today.
19. **A** Correct Answer: had ✓ Explanation: We use the past perfect passive because the prizes were given out before another past action (I arrived). The structure is had + been + past participle. The prizes had been given out before I arrived.
20. **A** Correct Answer: have ✓ Explanation: The emails is plural, so we use have in the present perfect passive. The structure is have + been + past participle. The emails have been read by everyone.

Part 3: Fill in the Blank

21. **has been cleaned|has been tidied** Correct Answer: has been cleaned ✓ Explanation: We use has been + past participle for the present perfect passive with a singular subject. The room has been cleaned.
22. **have been sent** Correct Answer: have been sent ✓ Explanation: We use have been + past participle for the present perfect passive with a plural subject. The letters have been sent.
23. **has been eaten** Correct Answer: has been eaten ✓ Explanation: We use has been + past participle for the present perfect passive with he, she, or it. The cake has been eaten.
24. **has been repaired** Correct Answer: has been repaired ✓ Explanation: We use has been + past participle for a single finished action that affects the present. My car has been repaired.
25. **have been broken** Correct Answer: have been broken ✓ Explanation: We use have been + past participle for the present perfect passive with plural subjects like the windows. The windows have been broken.

26. **been done** Correct Answer: been done ✓ Explanation: In questions with the present perfect passive, we use has/have + been + past participle. Has it been done?
27. **has been built** Correct Answer: has been built ✓ Explanation: We use has been + past participle for a completed action with a result we can see now. The park has been built.
28. **have been sold** Correct Answer: have been sold ✓ Explanation: We use have been + past participle when talking about a completed action that affects the present situation. All the tickets have been sold.
29. **has been fed** Correct Answer: has been fed ✓ Explanation: We use has been + past participle for the present perfect passive. Feed → fed is an irregular past participle. The dog has been fed.
30. **have not been read|haven't been read** Correct Answer: have not been read ✓ Explanation: For negative present perfect passive, we use have not been + past participle. The emails have not been read yet.

Score Guide

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|----------------------|--|
| 27–30 Correct | Excellent! You have mastered this topic. |
| 23–26 Correct | Very good! Review the rules you missed. |
| 18–22 Correct | Good start. Re-read the lesson and examples. |
| 0–17 Correct | Study the lesson again before retaking the test. |