

## Refresh your memory

## The passive

be + past participle  
 it does → it is done  
 it is doing → it is being done  
 it did → it was done, etc.

Used when the person who does the action is obvious or unknown

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## Reported speech

I've finished!  
 He said he had finished.

direct	reported
present	→ past
past	→ past / past perfect

present	
perfect	→ past perfect
will	→ would

When you report what someone said, move the original tense back in time

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## 6.3 Grammar The passive and reported speech

## Test yourself: The passive

1 Change these active sentences to the passive to avoid mentioning the agent.

- 1 Your company sometimes releases illegal levels of nitrates into the river.
- 2 Your department is making too many mistakes at the moment.
- 3 Unfortunately, you made a poor decision in hiring unqualified staff.
- 4 Our sub-contractors were employing children to make T-shirts in Asia.
- 5 Several anonymous journalists have accused us of industrial espionage.
- 6 My boss and several other managers had warned the company about the risks.
- 7 We can avoid conflict with the unions by making small concessions.
- 8 The authorities might ask you some delicate questions.
- 9 The Board, the Plant Manager and the trade unions all agreed that production staff should work a four-day week.
- 10 Head Office have decided that they're going to make 300 employees redundant.

## Test yourself: Reported speech

2 Complete the extracts from a report of a public meeting about a pollution problem.

- 1 'Nitrate levels in the local water supply are slightly higher than normal.'  
 CEO Ben Straw announced that \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 'It is possible that the factory is responsible.'  
 Mr Straw admitted \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 'There was a small chemical leak last Friday.'  
 Plant Manager Jane Lee explained \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 'We have taken measures to ensure that this situation cannot reoccur.'  
 Mrs Lee reassured the meeting that \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 'We are negotiating a settlement with the town council.'  
 Mr Straw said \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 'We will announce full details in a press statement in a few days' time.'  
 He promised the meeting that \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 'Has there ever been a problem like this before?'  
 Mrs Green, a local resident, asked if \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 'No, I can not remember any other leaks in 30 years at the factory.'  
 Mrs Lee replied that \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 'When do you plan to re-open the factory?'  
 Pat Holz, a union representative, enquired when \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 'As soon as possible, but some staff may be laid off for a few days.'  
 Mr Straw warned that \_\_\_\_\_

3 Read the following extracts from an interview with the CEO of a multinational oil company. Report the phrases in **bold** using the verbs in brackets, as in the example.

- 1 'I repeat what I said a few moments ago: **my company does everything it can to limit the impact of our activities on the environment.**' (emphasize)  
 The CEO emphasized that the company did everything it could to limit the impact of its activities on the environment.
- 2 'I really can't accept that. You need to understand that **developing countries are extremely grateful for the investment and the jobs that we bring.**' (argue)
- 3 'I think there's a slight misunderstanding here. Yes, **we do make fair profits and pay good dividends, but we've never exploited our employees.**' (explain)
- 4 'Yes, that's a fair point: **we can, and we will, do more to develop sources of alternative energy** such as wind, wave and solar power.' (accept)
- 5 'Well, we have little or no influence on government policy on taxation, but no, **I do not feel that higher petrol prices will reduce traffic and pollution.**' (comment)

## Internet research

Read the business pages of an online newspaper to find interesting comments and quotes from people and companies in the news. Tell a partner what was said.

**4** Read the four extracts from newspaper reports. Then say who made the twelve statements below and explain how you know this. What phrases helped you?

CEO KLAAS ROOS announced an end to manufacturing in Europe, informing shareholders that labour costs could not be justified, and explaining that Asian textile imports could no longer be matched for price.


Speaking to our reporter on the spot, Ms Gronko explained that all villagers forced to leave their homes by the new road would be compensated. Asked to what level, she replied that she was unable to give a figure, but added that discussions were being held with local representatives.

Journalists are reported to have been refused entry to Plazachem's Tashkent plant after leakages of toxic chemicals were described by workers. Employees claimed that health and safety regulations had not been applied for the last five years, and that several fatal accidents had occurred. Plazachem management declined to comment.

Asked how the company intended to compensate the victims of the accident, Mr Sanchez answered that no decision had yet been reached. Emphasizing the complexity of the legal situation, he suggested negotiations may be protracted.

- |                                       |                                    |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 'It's just too expensive.'          | 7 'It's too early to say.'         |
| 2 'It's dangerous: people have died.' | 8 'They will be paid.'             |
| 3 'We're still talking.'              | 9 'We are closing down.'           |
| 4 'It could take years.'              | 10 'Your request has been denied.' |
| 5 'I don't know.'                     | 11 'We can't compete.'             |
| 6 'It's really not simple.'           | 12 'I'm afraid he's unavailable.'  |

## Listening and reporting

**5**  2:52-2:57 A manufacturing plant in Kassra, a small town in Algeria, has just made 100 people redundant. Listen to six extracts from a conversation between Geoffrey Bullard, the Plant Manager, and Leila Belabed, a member of the mayor's staff. For each extract, decide how Leila reported to the mayor, using appropriate verbs, as in the example.

1 *I complained that 100 people had been made redundant and I reminded Mr Bullard that he had promised to create jobs for the town.*

**6** Explain these formal announcements to a foreign visitor in informal language.

- Protective glasses must be worn beyond this point.  
*You have to wear special protective glasses from this point onwards.*
- Visitors are requested to use the stairs while the lift is under repair.
- Customers are advised that no refunds will be made without a receipt.
- Deposits will only be refunded after the return of all equipment to reception.
- All meetings are transferred to the training centre during redecoration of the conference room.
- Only expenses which have been approved by a manager will be reimbursed.

## Roleplay

**7** With a partner, roleplay a conversation between a dissatisfied customer and a salesperson. First decide what the customer bought, and make a list of promises the salesperson made. Use reporting verbs from the boxes, as in the example.

• Verbs with *me*, e.g. *you told me (that)...*  
tell promise assure ask

• Verbs without *me*, e.g. *you said (that)...*  
say guarantee claim explain imply state

A: *I'm very dissatisfied with this car. You promised me it would do 160 kilometres per hour!*  
B: *No, sir. I'm sorry, you asked me if it would do 160, and I said it would, but only downhill with the wind behind you.*

