

# La Voix Passive

Voice is a grammatical term which indicates the relationship between the subject and the verb. There are three different voices in French (and English).

In the passive voice, the action described by the verb is being done to the subject by an agent.

## Active Voice

David fait le ménage.	David is doing the housework.
Lise lit le livre.	Lise is reading the book.
Tout le monde le respecte.	Everyone respects him.
Mes amis aiment ma mère.	My friends love my mother.

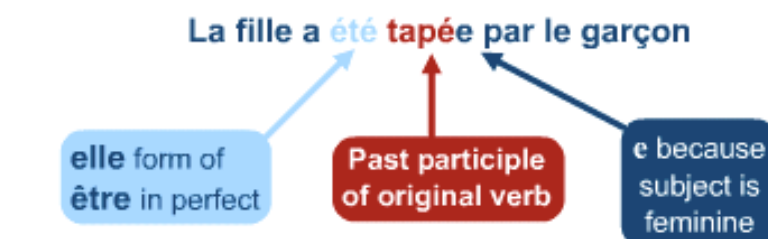
E.g. David = Agent, Housework = Subject

## Passive Voice

Le ménage est fait par David.	The housework is done by David.
Le livre est lu par Lisa.	The book is read by Lisa.
Il est respecté de tout le monde.	He is respected by everyone.
Ma mère est aimée de mes amis.	My mother is loved by my friends.

## Formation of La Voix Passive

- La voix passive is formed with the conjugated verb être + past participle of the active verb in the sentence.
- The past participle has to agree with the gender of the subject, not the agent



La vaisselle est faite par Chantal    The dishes are done by Chantal

Les enfants sont nourris par Luc        The kids are fed by Luc

La voix passive also exists in all tenses and moods:

	Voix active	Voix passive
Présent	Anne fait la tarte	La tarte est faite par Anne
Passé Composé	Anne a fait la tarte	La tarte a été faite par Anne
Imparfait	Anne faisait la tarte	La tarte était faite par Anne
Futur	Anne fera la tarte	La tarte sera faite par Anne
Subjonctif	...qu'Anne fasse la tarte	...que la tarte soit faite par Anne

### Notes:

- When the verb expresses an action, the agent is introduced by the preposition par.

- When the verb expresses a state of being, the agent is often introduced by de.

## **Use of La Voix Passive**

The French voix passive is used for two reasons:

1. To focus on the person or thing performing the action
2. To focus on an action without identifying the performer

However, verbs that are normally followed by an indirect object (i.e. have an à before the noun) such as:

parler à, demander à, permettre à etc. cannot be used in the passive.

There are several alternatives to la voix passive in French:

To emphasise the performer, use c'est:

E.g. C'est un enfant qui a écrit ce livre.

To avoid identifying the performer, use either:

On

E.g. On a écrit ce livre en 1927.

Or

**Passive Impersonal (se)**

E.g. Ce livre se lit souvent.