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'Voice' refers to the relationship between the subject and the verb in a sentence. A sentence is said to be in the **active voice** if the subject is performing the action of the verb. For example, 'Tex is calling Tammy.' In this sentence, the subject (Tex) performs the action of calling Tammy. Active subjects are called 'agents'.

The **passive voice**, on the other hand, refers to a sentence in which the subject receives the action. In other words, the subject is passive, or acted upon by the agent. For example: 'Tammy is being called by Tex.' In this sentence, Tammy receives the action performed by Tex, the agent.

formation


= conjugated form of **être** + past participle of main verb (+ **par** + agent)

Note that the past participle always agrees in number and gender with the subject.

 Les Aggies sont battus (par les Longhorns).	The Aggies are beaten (by the Longhorns).
Les Aggies ont été battus (par les Longhorns).	The Aggies were beaten (by the Longhorns).
Les Aggies seront battus (par les Longhorns).	The Aggies will be beaten (by the Longhorns).




The agent, when mentioned, is usually preceded by **par**. However, with the verbs **aimer**, **connaître**, and **respecter**, the agent is introduced by **de** instead.

 Tammy est aimée de Tex. Tex est bien connu de toutes les étudiantes et respecté de tous les professeurs.	Tammy is loved by Tex. Tex is well-known to all the female students and respected by all the professors.
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uses

The passive voice places the focus on the object of the verb rather than the subject:

 Tex a écrit le livre <i>Guerre et Amour</i> .	Tex wrote the book <i>War and Love</i> .
Le livre <i>Guerre et Amour</i> a été écrit par Tex.	The book <i>War and Love</i> was written by Tex.

The passive voice draws attention to an event without necessarily mentioning who is responsible for it:

 Oh, Corey et Fiona ont été enlevés!	Oh, Corey and Fiona were abducted!
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The passive voice is often used for inventions, laws, and, logically enough, for events that one falls victim to:

 Les parents de Tex ont été écrasés . La loi SOS-tatou a été votée .	Tex' parents were run over. The SOS-armadillo law has been passed.
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Un nouveau genre de grammaire **a été créé**.

A new kind of grammar was created.

ways to avoid the passive

The passive voice is used more frequently in English than in French. Thus, in French, when the agent of the verb can be identified, it is better to use the active voice and make the agent the subject of the verb.

A common way to avoid the passive in French is to use the active voice with **on** as the subject. For example, 'I was told that Tex loves Tammy' would be translated as '**On**'a dit que Tex aimait Tammy'.

When making general statements about known facts, pronominal verbs are often used:



LE FOOTBALL AMÉRICAIN
SE JOUE À ONZE.



Le football américain **se joue** à onze.

Football is played with 11 players.

Le vin rouge **se boit** à température ambiante.

Red wine is drunk at room temperature.

Les frites **se mangent** avec du ketchup.

Fries are eaten with ketchup.

Le français **se parle** en Louisiane.

French is spoken in Louisiana.

Listen to the dialogue:



Tammy et Tex regardent les informations à la télé. Le journaliste déclare:

Tammy and Tex are watching the news on TV. The journalist states:

Aujourd'hui, l'équipe des Aggies **a été battue** et le moral des joueurs **est** profondément **affecté par** cette défaite, la dixième fois de suite cette saison. Par contre, les Longhorns ont beaucoup de succès. Depuis que le trophée Heisman **a été remporté par** le légendaire Ricky Williams, rien ne les arrête.

Today, the team of the Aggies was defeated and the morale of the players is deeply affected by this defeat, the tenth time in a row this season. In contrast, the Longhorns are having a lot of success. Since the Heisman trophy was won by the legendary Ricky Williams, nothing can stop them.



exercices

fill in the blanks

Fill in the blank with the passive form of the verb between parentheses. Conjugate the verb in the tense given in parentheses.

1. Tex : Ce plat _____ en France. (apprécier, PRESENT)
2. Tammy : Cette tarte _____ par Edouard. (faire, PASSE COMPOSE)
3. Tex : La danse country _____ par les Texans. (inventer, PASSE COMPOSE)

4. Le roman de Tex _____ à des millions d'exemplaires. (vendre, FUTUR)
5. Tex _____ par des nonnes. (élever, PASSE COMPOSE)
6. Les poèmes érotiques de Tex _____. (censurer, PASSE COMPOSE)
7. Tex, Joe-Bob et Edouard _____ chez Tammy ce soir. (inviter, PRESENT)
8. Tex _____ par Bette. (poursuivre/'to chase', PRESENT)
9. Tex et Tammy _____ chaleureusement par Paw-Paw. (accueillir, PRESENT)
10. Monsieur, le café _____ ! (servir, PRESENT)
11. Rita : Je ne peux pas venir ce soir, je _____ ! (prendre, PRESENT)
12. Tex : Est-ce je _____ de mon public? (aimer, FUTUR)