

PASSIVE VOICE

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Target Students: Upper intermediate

Corpus Used: The British National Corpus

Class Duration: 90 minutes

Topic: Endangered Species

Lesson Objectives:

By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to

1. Demonstrate awareness of the verb phrase structure of the passive voice;
2. Display an understanding of the uses of the passive voice;
3. Show awareness of when the agent should be included in the passive structure;
4. Reconstruct a text using the correct voices in a dictogloss activity.

A. Video watching

- (a) Watch the video 'Jungle City - Saving the world's endangered animals and their habitat' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hThzeRIiJU>
- (b) Fill in the blanks of Text 1.

Text 1

This year, for the first time in history, there (1) will be more than 7 billion people on Earth, leaving little space for wildlife and wild spaces on which all life depends. Across Asia, some of the world's most iconic animals (2) are disappearing fast. In the past 100 years populations (3) have already been decimated –

- Asian elephants: from 250,000 down to 30,000
- Tigers: from 100,000 down to 3,000
- Sumatran orangutans: from 150,000 down to 7,000
- Gharial: from 10,000 down to 200
- Rhinoceros hornbills: from 50,000 down to 3,000

If we lose the jungles, they will all be gone. And life for us (4) will never be the same again. This (5) is happening within your lifetime.

Their future is in your hands.

Will your children ever see this?



Do you care? Through Jungle City we (6) can change this.

B. Text Comparison

Read the following two news articles about animals. Underline the verb phrases in each text. Is there any difference in the choice of the verb phrase structure in the two texts? What makes the difference?

Text 2

1	Dead whale found on remote beach in Plover Cove Country Park
2	The bloated body of a whale the length of a bus has been found at a remote beach in
3	the New Territories.
4	The 10.8-metre-long animal, found beached in an inner bay off Hung Shek Mun, in
5	Plover Cove Country Park, was thought to be a female Bryde's whale.
6	When marine experts arrived yesterday morning, the rotting body was lying partially
7	submerged in the shallow water, giving off a stench. It had some cuts on its body.
8	In 2009, a 10-metre-long humpback whale was spotted in Hong Kong waters. It was
9	believed to be the first sighting of the species in the city. Experts believed the animal
10	accidentally entered Hong Kong harbour after getting lost.

11	In 2003, a sperm whale was found washed up at Tai Long Wan in Sai Kung. The 10-metre-long creature was about two years old and weighed 15 tonnes.
12	
13	In 1994, the carcass of a Bryde's whale was found in Tolo Harbour.

(Adapted from *the South China Morning Post*, 30 March, 2014)

Text 3

1	Meet the man who shoots China's rarest animals to save them from extinction
2	<i>Wildlife photographer Xi Zhinong has been working to protect endangered species for decades. Now he's on a mission to save the green peacock, whose habitat is under threat from a hydroelectric plant.</i>
3	
4	
5	
6	For more than three decades, wildlife photographer and conservationist Xi Zhinong has been trying to protect nature by capturing it on camera. He told the story of the Yunnan snub-nosed monkey in the 1990s, when the endangered species that lives in the remote mountain forests of southwest China was little known to the public. He lobbied the authorities and managed to save the monkeys' habitat – old-growth forest – from being logged. Xi also campaigned to protect Tibetan antelopes, which were under threat from poachers shooting the animals for their woolly coats. His reports raised awareness of the fur trade and protection of the animals, which are native to the Tibetan plateau, was stepped up.
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(Adapted from *the South China Morning Post*, 15 July, 2017)

Answer:

The verb phrases in Text 2 are mainly in the passive voice because the text is about whales, which are the patients (rather than the doers) receiving the actions.

The verb phrases in Text 2 are mainly in the active voice because the text is about Xi Zhinong, who is the doer of the actions.

C. Structure of Passive and Active Voices

(a) Read the lines below. Which version is better to continue the text?

	Version 1 (from BNC)	Version 2
1a	<p>ACET Director, Dr Patrick Dixon, recently told the National Symposium on Teenage Sexuality at Swanwick.</p> <p>The conference was attended by 300 Church youth leaders and school workers from across the country.</p>	<p>1b</p> <p>300 Church youth leaders and school workers from across the country attended the conference.</p>
2a	<p>In the UK, there are nearly 5,000 reported cases of AIDS, of which nearly 3,000 have already died.</p> <p>1 in 500 Londoners are believed to have infection.</p>	<p>2b</p> <p>We believe 1 in 500 Londoners have infection.</p>
3a	<p>All you have to do is to fill in the details, including your name, address, the amount you wish to give, and sign and date the document in front of a witness.</p> <p>You will also be asked to sign the certificate.</p>	<p>3b</p> <p>People will ask you to sign the certificate.</p>

(b) Fill in the blanks.

*Version 1 is written in (*active / passive) voice while Version 2 is written in (*active / passive) voice. Version 1 is a better choice because the subject has already been introduced in the previous sentence. The choice of the passive in Version 1 can make the text more cohesive.*

D. Passive Verb Phrase Structure

(a) Read the lines below. Highlight the verb phrases.

e.g.	Your decision could be influenced by that drug.
1.	Pre-recorded broadcasts are made by BBC Radio News for Radio 4's "World at One".
2.	Patrick's attendance at the Florence Conference was sponsored by the medical firm.
3.	The success of the initial pilot programme has been recognised by the Ministry of Health.
4.	Sponsorship is provided by a charity which helps launch the programme.
5.	The certificate must be signed by the donor.
6.	You will be visited by one of our teams who will discuss your needs with you.
7.	Over 150 citizens were killed by soldiers during the riots.

(b) Fill in the blanks.

All passive verb phrases have the structure of " _____ + _____ ".

E. With or without the Agent

(a) Read the lines below and underline the agent.

e.g.	You will be visited <u>by one of our teams who will discuss your needs with you.</u>
1.	New York is symbolised by the statue of Liberty.
2.	Morelli's method was extended by other scholars.
3.	A painting by Berthe Morisot needs to be approved by Bataille and Wildenstein.
4.	The limitations of the survey can be demonstrated by two examples from this book.
5.	Pre-recorded broadcasts are made by BBC Radio News for Radio 4's "World at One".
6.	Long before she reached the place, the car was stopped by the military.

(b) Fill in the blanks.

Are the agents important in construing the meaning of the sentences above? Yes.

The agent "by someone/ something" is added in the passive when the doer of the action is emphasised.

(c) When don't we include the agent in a passive sentence? Read the sentences below and match each with the best reason for not including the agent.

Sentences		Reasons
1. You will also be asked to sign the certificate.		a. The doer is known as common sense.
2. These years after he was murdered, the mystery remains unsolved.		b. The doer is unimportant.
3. The surgery was operated without detailed planning.		c. The doer is unknown.
4. Thoza Khonje, a 43-year-old thief, was arrested.		d. Don't want to assign responsibility.

F. Dictogloss activity

(a) Video-watching (optional): Polar Bears and How to Save them

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEFASpHL9nM>

(b) Listen to a text about polar bears. Your teacher will read it two times. Do the following:

- (1) Listen for the meaning the first time your teacher reads the text.
- (2) Jot down key notes the second time you listen to the reading.
- (3) Reconstruct the text based on the notes you have taken.
- (4) In pairs, revise the text to make it as close to the original text as possible.

Text (for Teacher's use)

Can you think of giant bears with white fur that live in the cold Arctic? These bears are called polar bears. Unfortunately, polar bears are an endangered species.

Many animals around the world are considered endangered species. Loss of habitat and hunting threatens their existence. The endangered species list was updated to include the polar bear in 2008. Polar bears are currently listed as vulnerable by IUCN's Red List. The fate of polar bears is greatly impacted by global warming. If the temperature goes up, the sea ice that the polar bear lives on will melt.

(Adapted from Animal Fact Guide, <http://www.animalfactguide.com/animal-facts/polar-bear/> and Why are Polar Bears Endangered? - Lesson for Kids, <https://study.com/academy/lesson/why-are-polar-bears-endangered-lesson-for-kids.html>)

