

3.13 Passives

2 Structure

- (a) The data was collected and the two groups (were) compared.
- (b) 120 people in three social classes were interviewed.
- (c) The results were checked and several errors (were) found.
- (d) An analysis of the findings will be made.
- (e) Four doctors were asked to give their opinions.
- (f) The report was written and ten copies (were) distributed.

3 Using adverbs

- (a) The company was profitably run by the Connors family until 1981.
- (b) It has been optimistically predicted that prisons will be unnecessary in the future (by Dr Weber).
- (c) All students in the exam were helpfully provided with pencils.
- (d) The percentages were accurately calculated to three decimal places (by researchers).
- (e) The essays were punctually handed in on Tuesday morning.
- (f) The lifecycles of 15 types of mice were carefully researched.

5 Practice B

Passive	Active possible?	Active
He was worn out	Yes	The effort . . . had worn him out

He was born	No	
John was concerned by	Yes	The situation of the poor concerned John . . .
a (. . .) shop which was called	Yes	which he called . . .
John was helped financially	Yes	his father-in-law helped him . . .
the business was taken over	Yes	his wife took the business over . . .
she was soon assisted	Yes	their 10-year-old son assisted her

The effect of using the passive throughout would be to make the tone very formal.

6 Practice C

(Example paragraph)

In 1889 he was introduced to Florence Rowe, the daughter of a bookseller, while on holiday. After they were married her ideas affected the business: the product range was enlarged to include stationery and books. The Boots subscription library and in-store cafes were also introduced due to Florence's influence. During the first world war the Boots factories made a variety of products, from sterilisers to gas masks. But after the war Jesse was attacked by arthritis and, worried by the economic prospects, he sold the company to an American rival for £2m. This, however, went bankrupt during the Depression and Boots was then bought by a British group for £6m, and Jesse's son, John became chairman. The famous No.7 cosmetics range was launched in the 1930s and in the second world war the factories produced both saccharin and penicillin. However, recently the company has been threatened by intense competition from supermarkets in its core pharmaceutical business.