



B2 - Environmental issues

Recognise and produce passive voice structures in the present and past forms and discuss environmental problems using the passive voice.

Warm-up discussion

1. What environmental issues affect your country or area?
2. What have you seen in the news recently?
3. Who is responsible for protecting the environment?



The Forests Are Being Destroyed



Thousands of trees are cut down every day in the Amazon. Large areas of land are cleared for farming. As a result, many animal species are threatened. Recently, stricter laws have been introduced to protect biodiversity, but illegal logging is still carried out in remote areas

Passive voice VS. active voice

Voice	Structure	Example
Active	Subject + verb + object	<i>People recycle glass bottles.</i>
Passive	Object + form of 'to be' + past participle (+ by agent)	<i>Glass bottles are recycled (by people).</i>

Active voice:

Used when the subject (doer) is important. For clear, direct sentences. Common in everyday conversation.

Passive voice:

Used when the object or action is more important. When the doer is unknown, unimportant, or obvious. To sound more formal or objective (common in academic or scientific texts, and news reports).

Grammar focus – Passive voice review

Tense	Active	Passive
Present simple	<i>People pollute the air.</i>	<i>The air is polluted.</i>
Past simple	<i>Factories burned the waste.</i>	<i>The waste was burned.</i>
Present continuous	<i>They are clearing the land.</i>	<i>The land is being cleared.</i>
Present perfect	<i>They have banned plastic bags.</i>	<i>Plastic bags have been banned.</i>
Modal passive	<i>Governments should take action.</i>	<i>Actions should be taken.</i>

When to use the passive:

- When the agent is unknown, unimportant, or obvious.
- To focus on the action or result.
- For formal or objective tone (e.g., news, reports).



Match the noun with the definition



1. Pollution	A. Gases like CO ₂ and methane that trap heat in the atmosphere.
2. Climate change	B. The variety of plants and animals in a particular habitat.
3. Deforestation	C. Materials thrown away because they are no longer needed.
4. Emissions	D. Substances released into the air, often from factories or cars.
5. Biodiversity	E. Harmful substances in the air, water, or land.
6. Greenhouse gases	F. Sources of energy that can naturally replenish like wind and sunlight.
7. Waste	G. Fuel types like coal, oil, and gas made from ancient organisms.
8. Fossil fuels	H. Materials from the earth that humans use (e.g., water, minerals).
9. Renewable energy	I. The long-term shift in global temperatures and weather patterns.
10. Natural resources	J. The large-scale cutting down of forests.

Complete using the correct passive form.

Tons of plastic waste _____ (dump) into the ocean each year. Endangered animals _____ (hunt) illegally in many countries. In recent years, clean energy initiatives _____ (launch) across Europe. However, some harmful chemicals still _____ (release) into the atmosphere.



Speaking activity – Environmental poster campaign

Instructions: In pairs, create a short campaign speech or poster using at least 5 passive structures to:

1. Describe the environmental problem.
2. Explain what is being done.
3. Suggest what should be done.
4. Share who is affected.

Remember to use sequencing words like: “first”, “then”, “next”, “after that”, and “finally”.



Reorder the words

1. recycled / are / Bottles / in / centre / this
2. protected / be / must / species / Endangered
3. into / the / atmosphere / gases / emitted / are / harmful
4. by / forests / cleared / are / The / companies / illegal
5. plastic / bags / have / banned / been / many / in / countries
6. used / be / energy / should / Renewable / more
7. polluted / being / is / River / The / rapidly
8. globally / raised / been / awareness / has / Climate
9. damaged / environment / is / being / The / constantly
10. thrown / not / should / be / away / Batteries



Gap-fill: Adjectives in the passive voice

1. New materials are being developed so that packaging can be more _____ (eco-friendly / toxic).
 2. Several animal species have been classified as _____ (renewable / endangered) due to habitat destruction.
 3. Harmful chemicals are released during the burning of _____ (toxic / sustainable) waste.
 4. Solar and wind power are promoted as _____ (natural / harmful) alternatives to fossil fuels.
 5. Many water sources have been made _____ (eco-friendly / harmful) by industrial pollution.
 6. Farming practices are being improved to become more _____ (sustainable / endangered).
 7. Old newspapers and glass bottles are now considered _____ (natural / renewable) materials.
 8. Forests are protected because they provide essential _____ (sustainable / natural) resources.
 9. Oil and gas are not considered _____ (renewable / global) because they take millions of years to form.
 10. Climate-related disasters are being reported on a _____ (global / toxic) scale.
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Sentence transformation: active → passive

1. Factories release toxic gases into the atmosphere.
2. Conservation groups protect endangered species across the world.
3. Companies are developing eco-friendly alternatives to plastic.
4. Wind and solar power provide renewable energy.
5. Oil spills have made the ocean harmful to marine life.
6. Sustainable farming practices are improving the quality of soil.
7. Natural resources give communities clean water and air.
8. Scientists have classified many animals as endangered.
9. The news reports climate disasters on a global scale.
10. Deforestation is turning once-healthy forests into toxic areas.



Useful phrases and collocations

1. Reduce carbon footprint = To lower the amount of CO₂ you produce.
2. Protect the environment = To prevent harm to nature and ecosystems.
3. Take action = To begin doing something to solve a problem.
4. Raise awareness = To educate others about an issue.
5. Combat climate change = To take measures to reduce or stop climate change.
6. Face a crisis = To experience a serious and urgent problem.
7. Use public transport = A more eco-friendly alternative to private vehicles.



Adjectives related to the environment

1. Sustainable = Capable of being continued without causing harm.
2. Eco-friendly = Not harmful to the environment.
3. Toxic = Poisonous or harmful to living things.
4. Renewable = Naturally restored and not depleted when used.
5. Endangered = At risk of becoming extinct.
6. Harmful = Causing damage or injury.
7. Global = Relating to the whole world.
8. Natural = Found in nature, not made by humans.





Thank you for your support.

YouTube: @elucidatedenglish