

## 63 Other passive structures

Hisarlık in modern-day Turkey is believed to be the site of the ancient city of Troy.

### 1 Passive reporting structures

When we want to describe an impersonal or general feeling (not something said by a particular person), or we don't want to mention the person whose words are being reported, we can use a passive form of the reporting verb. For example:

- subject + passive verb + *to* + infinitive:

*He was said to be innocent. He was asked to leave.*

- *It* + passive verb + *that* clause: *It was said that he was innocent.*

We can use these passive patterns as an alternative to using an impersonal subject like *they*:  
*They said he was innocent.*

More on structures with impersonal *it* ► Unit 44

We can use the same pattern with *it* when reporting specific decisions or opinions:  
*It was decided/agreed/felt that it would be too costly to take the case to trial.*

**ACADEMIC ENGLISH** We can use these structures with verbs such as *assume, argue, believe, demonstrate, know*, etc:

*Hisarlık is believed to be the site of ancient Troy.*

*It is often argued that rapid deforestation is the cause of most soil erosion.*

*be regarded as/considered as*, etc. ► Unit 62.1

We can also use the pattern with *it* to report specific opinions, conclusions, etc:

*In 'The Selfish Gene' it is suggested that genes control almost every aspect of human behaviour.*

### 2 Passives with get

In informal English, *get* can be used instead of *be* in passive forms which describe actions.

We often use *get* to describe accidental, negative, unusual or unexpected actions:

*How did he get hurt?* (= How was he hurt?)

*His hand got trapped in the car door.* (= His hand was trapped ...)

*Hurry up or you'll get caught in the storm. Some of the workers are getting laid off.*

*Apparently there was a power cut – Jane got stuck in the lift for over an hour!*



We cannot use *get* to describe states:

*X That house gets owned by my uncle. ✓ That house is owned by my uncle.* (state)

### 3 make, let, help, etc.

With the verbs *make* (meaning *force* or *require*), *see*, *hear* and *help* we make active sentences with verb + object + infinitive without *to*:

*The boss made me work late. I saw her take it. We helped them unpack.*

But in the passive form we use the infinitive with *to*:

→ *I was made to work late. She was seen to take it. They were helped to unpack.*

The verb *let* (meaning *allow*) has no passive form so we use a passive form of *allow/permit* or *give permission* + infinitive with *to*:

*The teacher let us leave early.* → *X We were let to leave early.*

*✓ We were allowed/permitted/given permission to leave early.*

## Practice

**1** Complete the second sentence so it has a similar meaning to the first, using the word in brackets.

- 1 The customs officer insisted that I open my suitcases. (made)  
I ..... the customs officer.
- 2 A farmer let us park the caravan in his field overnight. (permission)  
We ..... the farmer's field overnight.
- 3 A lot of people think the government is out of touch with public opinion. (felt)  
It ..... out of touch with public opinion.
- 4 Some people believe that the proposed legislation is unworkable. (considered)  
The proposed legislation .....
- 5 A witness saw the man hide something in his carry-on bag. (seen)  
The man ..... in his carry-on bag.
- 6 There's a risk of a large multinational taking over our small company. (getting)  
Our small company is at risk of .....

**2** **GRAMMAR IN USE** Read the newspaper extract and the dialogue below. Then use the words in the box to complete both. **4.20** Listen and check.

be taken over forced to make got criticised has been suggested have criticised  
interested it is reported that made to cut down on they say think thought to be

### Bad news for history fans

THE POPULAR Ancient History TV channel is

(1) ..... to be in danger of closing down. The channel is said (2) ..... losing a million dollars a week. Despite reasonable viewing figures, it has been unable to attract sufficient advertising, and investors (3) ..... the company's chief executive for failing to trim expenses. Last month the channel was (4) ..... redundancies in its production team, but the savings have not been sufficient to stave off the impending financial crisis. It (5) ..... that a larger channel might be interested in taking over, but NBC, CNN and HBO have all denied having any interest. However, (6) ..... the BBC may wish to buy some of the channel's award-winning documentaries.



DENISE You like watching the Ancient History channel, don't you?

ANDREA Yes, I really like it.

DENISE Well, people (7) ..... it might be closing down.  
(8) ..... it's losing millions of dollars every week.

ANDREA That's a pity. I know the boss (9) ..... for not making enough cuts last year. And weren't they (10) ..... their programming?

DENISE I don't know. But it seems they just don't get enough advertising.

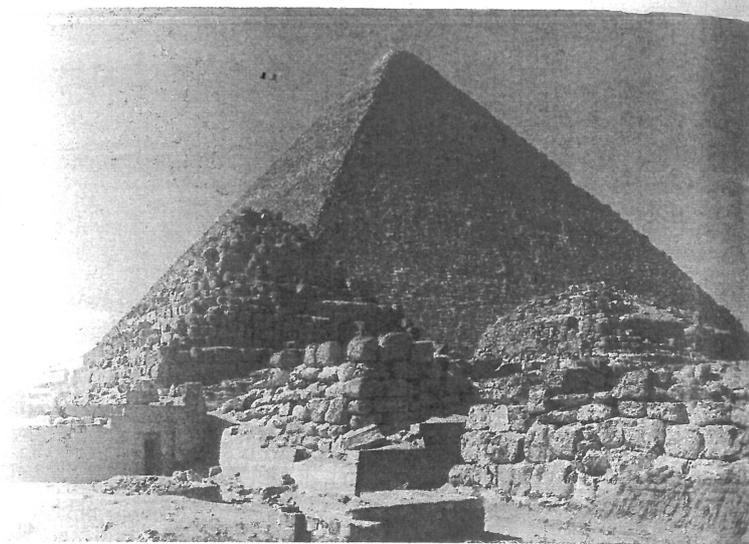
ANDREA Perhaps it could (11) ..... by another channel ...

DENISE I don't think any of them are (12) .....

ANDREA What about those documentaries? Someone like the BBC might want them ...

## 64 *have/get* *something done*

The pharaohs of ancient Egypt had their tombs built while they were still alive, as the work took many years to complete.



### 1 *have/get something done*

We use *have* + object + past participle (known as the causative) to describe something which is done for the subject by someone else. We can use it in all tenses.

*The pharaoh had the pyramid built while he was still alive.* (Slaves built it for the pharaoh.)

*Have you just had your hair done? It looks lovely.* (Has the hairdresser done it for you?)

*We'll probably have the roof repaired in the spring.* (Builders will do it.)

In informal English we can use *get* instead of *have*:

*Do you get your hair done at Ebony's? I'm going to get the keys copied. Do you want a set?*

*Harry got himself moved to the New York office.*

In imperatives it can be the person spoken to or someone else who will do the action:

*Have/Get that mess cleaned up at once!*

*Please have those spreadsheets faxed over to the New York office this afternoon.*

We can use the causative in future statements as commands or promises. Here it can be the subject of the sentence or someone else who will do the action:

*Make sure you have those keys back on my desk tomorrow morning.*

*Don't worry. I'll have the report finished before the meeting.* (I will do it or I will get it done.)

*We're going to get it fixed as soon as the insurance money comes through.*

We can also use this pattern to describe something which is done to the subject by someone else without them asking for it, often something unpleasant or unexpected:

*Liz had her passport stolen.* (= Her passport was stolen.)

*John got his tyres slashed by some hooligans.*

*Darryl argued with the police officer and ended up getting himself arrested.*

*Out of the blue, Mark had his plan approved by the board yesterday.*



With this meaning, we can only use *have*, not *get*, in the present perfect:

~~*I'm afraid Alicia has got her visa application refused.*~~

*✓ I'm afraid Alicia has had her visa application refused.*

### 2 *have somebody do something*

There is an 'active' version of the causative which means 'cause someone to do something'.

The object is the person who does the action. There are two patterns:

- *have* + object + infinitive:

*I had the mechanic repair my washing machine.*

*They're having the architect draw up a set of plans for the new extension.*

This pattern is more common in American English.

- *get* + object + *to* + infinitive: *I'll get the hairdresser to do my hair this afternoon.*

*We get the gardener to mow the lawn once a fortnight in the summer.*

In British English we can use the *get* + object + *to* + infinitive pattern with the meaning of 'persuade or force someone to do something':

*After numerous letters from our solicitor we finally got them to give us a refund.*

## Practice

### 1 Choose the word or phrase, A, B, C or D, which best completes each sentence.

- After waiting for ages for a plumber we ..... the leaking tap fixed.  
A get B had C have D having
- They are getting their uncle ..... them his cottage in the country.  
A lend B lending C to be lending D to lend
- The judge had the prisoner ..... down to the cells after the verdict.  
A take B to take C taken D taking
- I ..... my secretary retype the memo.  
A got B get C had D having
- Abigail ..... her husband to put up some shelves in the kitchen.  
A got B had C have D is having
- The minister will have his press officer ..... the news tomorrow.  
A announce B announced C to announce D being announced
- We'll ..... the builders to move the skip tomorrow morning.  
A get B have C be having D getting
- No problem. I'll ..... the figures printed out and on your desk by lunchtime.  
A having B getting C have D to get

### 2 GRAMMAR IN USE Complete the text with suitable forms of the verbs *have*, *get*, *bury*, *copy* or *make*. 4.21 Listen and check.

## The Terracotta Army

In 1974, Chinese farmers digging a water well near the city of Xi'an discovered several terracotta statues buried in the earth. Senior archaeologists were called in and (1) ..... a large pit dug in the surrounding area. What they discovered made headlines around the world – it was the fabled terracotta army of China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang.

According to the ancient historian, Sima Qian, Emperor Qin had (2) ..... an enormous underground necropolis, or city of the dead, constructed around the year 200 BCE. The emperor (3) ..... his servants to fill the necropolis with carved soldiers whose purpose was to protect him in death. For years people thought Sima Qian's account was simply a myth, but we now know it to be true.

Excavations continue at the site but archaeologists believe there to be around 8,000 soldiers and over 500 horses. The emperor (4) ..... each soldier (5) ..... separately, so that no two soldiers look exactly the same. Because

of the huge number of statues required, a certain amount of mass production was necessary. But the emperor (6) ..... his artists to carve a different face on each statue. Some people believe he made the artists (7) ..... the faces of real soldiers, but this seems unlikely. Because the emperor wanted his army to last, he (8) ..... his carved soldiers (9) ..... from terracotta, which, unlike wood, does not rot or disintegrate with time.

Emperor Qin (10) ..... himself (11) ..... in a mausoleum close to the site of the terracotta army. It is likely that in the coming years the Chinese government will (12) ..... its archaeologists to excavate the tomb. It may turn out to contain even greater treasures than those found in the tomb of Tutankhamun in Egypt. For it is certain that an emperor as powerful as Qin would have (13) ..... his most valuable treasures (14) ..... close to his own body.

