

# A Very Detailed Explanation of the *Passive Voice* (A2 Level) Using “All You Need Is Love”

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# 1. What Is the Passive Voice?

In English, we have two main “voices” for verbs:

## Active Voice

- The subject (the “doer”) does the action.
- Example: *John sings the song.* (John = doer of the action “sings”)

## Passive Voice

- The subject is **not** the one doing the action. Instead, the action is **done to** the subject.
- We often **omit** the “doer” or put it at the end after “by.”
- Example: *The song is sung by John.*

When we use the **Passive Voice**, we focus on the **object** (the thing receiving the action), not on the doer. This is very common in English when we want to show what happens to someone or something, or when the doer is unknown, unimportant, or obvious.

## 2. How Do We Form the Passive Voice?

A form of the verb “**to be**” (am/is/are/was/were /been/being).

The **past participle** of the main verb (for example, *made, sung, seen, loved*).

**Structure:**  
Subject + form of “to be” + past participle  
+ (by + doer)

# Examples

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Active: *They bake bread.*

- Passive: *Bread **is baked** (by them).*

Active: *People sing the song.*

- Passive: *The song **is sung** (by people).*

Notice that in the Passive Voice we can use “by...” to show **who does** the action. But sometimes we do **not** need “by...” if it is clear or not important.

# 3. Why Use the Passive Voice?

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We do not know who does the action.

- Example: *The window was broken.* (We do not know who broke it.)

The doer is not important.

- Example: *The tickets were sold out.* (We only care that all tickets are gone.)

We want to **focus** on the object or the action, not on the person doing the action.

- Example: *Love is needed.* (Focus on love, not on who needs it.)

## 4. Looking at the Song Lyrics for Inspiration

In the song *"All You Need Is Love,"* we have lines like:

- *"There's nothing you can do that can't be done"*
- *"Nothing you can sing that can't be sung"*

Let's see how we can **transform** these into passive-style examples or find the passive ideas hidden there.

# Example 1

**Active style:** *“You can do anything.”*

**Passive style:** *“Anything can be done.”*

We form it by using “can be” (modal + be) + past participle “done.”

So: “Nothing you can do that can’t be done” could be rephrased as “Nothing exists that cannot be done.” (still showing a passive idea—something “**is done**” by someone).

## Example 2

**Active style:** *"You can sing every song."*

**Passive style:** *"Every song can be sung (by you)."*

Again, we see: "can be" + "sung" (past participle of "sing").

In the lyrics, we see the phrase *"Nothing you can sing that can't be sung."* This suggests that every song **can be** sung (passive). The focus is on the song receiving the action of "singing," not on who is doing the singing.



## 5. Step-by-Step Passive Transformation

We will create a short step-by-step transformation with a simple line, imagining we have an active sentence from the song:

- **Active:** *People love this song.*
- Identify the **object**: “this song.”
- Decide the tense or modal: Let’s use Present Simple.
- Form of “to be”: “is.”
- Past participle of “love”: “loved.”
- Add “by people” if you want to mention the doer.
- **Passive:** *This song **is loved** (by people).*

# 6. Other Tenses in the Passive Voice

## Present Continuous

- Active: *They are recording a new version.*
- Passive: *A new version **is being recorded** (by them).*

## Past Simple

- Active: *They wrote the song in 1967.*
- Passive: *The song **was written** in 1967 (by them).*

## Modal Verbs (like can, could, should)

- Active: *You can play the guitar.*
- Passive: *The guitar **can be played** (by you).*

## 7. Practice with the Song Lyrics



Let's take a line from the song and **imagine** or **create** passive forms (even if it is not exactly in the original lyrics):



Original: *"There's nothing you can do that can't be done."*

Implied Passive: "Everything **can be done** (by someone)."



Original: *"Nothing you can sing that can't be sung."*

Implied Passive: "Any song **can be sung** (by someone)."



Original: *"All you need is love."*

We can invent a Passive sentence: "Love **is needed** (by everyone)."

That shows how we use "be" + "needed."

# 8. Common Mistakes and Tips

## Forgetting “to be”

- We must always include the correct form of the verb “to be” in the passive.
- *Wrong*: “This song recorded in 1967.”
- *Correct*: “This song **was recorded** in 1967.”

## Using the wrong past participle

- Some verbs have irregular past participles (e.g., *speak* → *spoken*, *sing* → *sung*, *do* → *done*).
- Make sure to learn the **third form** (past participle) for each verb.

## Unnecessary “by...”

- If it is obvious or not important who does the action, we can omit “by...”
- *Example*: “The house was built in 1950.” (We do not say “by whom” because it’s not important here.)

## Remember your tense

- Check if you need Present Simple, Past Simple, or another tense. Match the correct form of “to be.”

## 9. Simple Exercises

### 1) Transform the sentences to the passive:

- a) "People sing *All You Need Is Love* everywhere."
  - Answer: "*All You Need Is Love* **is sung** everywhere."
- b) "Fans have watched the original video many times."
  - Answer: "The original video **has been watched** many times (by fans)."
- c) "People will always remember the message of love."
  - Answer: "The message of love **will always be remembered** (by people)."

### 2) Create your own passive sentences about music or love:

- *Example:* "The concert hall **is filled** with happy fans."

## 10. Conclusion

The **Passive Voice** is used to focus on the action or object, rather than the person doing the action. We form it with a form of the verb “to be” + the past participle of the main verb. In *“All You Need Is Love,”* we can see many examples hinting at passive structures: *“Nothing you can do that can’t be done”* suggests that everything **can be done** by someone. This helps us see how the passive can shift our focus from “who does something” to “what is done.”

# Remember:

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Use “**to be**” in the correct tense.



Use the **past participle** (done, sung, needed, etc.).



Add “by...” only when needed.