



The Passive World

How everyday products are made and why the passive voice is everywhere

B2

Reading

Grammar

40 min

Lesson Objectives

- Read an article about how chocolate is made
- Learn vocabulary related to manufacturing and production
- Use the passive voice in all major tenses
- Know when to choose passive over active voice
- Discuss how everyday products are manufactured
- Write a process description using the passive

1 Before You Read

- What is your favourite food or drink? Do you know how it is made?
- Have you ever visited a factory or watched a documentary about production?
- Do you think consumers care about how their products are manufactured?

2 Reading: From Bean to Bar

"Nine out of ten people say they love chocolate. The tenth person is lying."

Chocolate is consumed in enormous quantities around the world — over 7.5 million tonnes every year. It is enjoyed in countless forms: as a hot drink, a dessert ingredient, a snack bar, or an elaborate handmade truffle. Yet very few chocolate lovers know what actually happens between the tropical farm and the shop shelf. The journey is a complex, labour-intensive process involving multiple countries and a surprising amount of science.

It all begins near the equator. Cocoa trees only grow in hot, humid climates, so most cocoa is grown in West Africa — particularly Ivory Coast and Ghana, where roughly 60% of the global supply is produced. The trees bear large pods, and inside each pod, 30–50 beans are found. The pods are harvested by hand using machetes. Machines cannot be used because the trees are too fragile.

Once opened, the beans are scooped out and placed in wooden boxes for fermentation — a step that was not fully understood until the 20th century. The beans are left to ferment for 5–7 days, during which yeast and bacteria develop the rich flavours. Without fermentation, chocolate would taste flat and bitter. After fermentation, beans are spread in the sun to dry. They must be turned regularly to prevent mould.

When dried, beans are packed into sacks and are shipped to factories — mostly in Europe and North America. There, beans are inspected, then are roasted at 120–150°C. The roasted beans are cracked and shells are removed. The inner nibs are ground into cocoa liquor — no alcohol.

For dark chocolate, the liquor is mixed with sugar and cocoa butter. For milk chocolate, milk powder is also added. White chocolate, controversially, is made only from cocoa butter, sugar, and milk. The mixture is refined and conched — continuously stirred for hours — to develop a smooth texture. Finally, it is tempered, is poured into moulds, is cooled, and is wrapped.

Next time you unwrap a chocolate bar, appreciate the extraordinary journey. That little bar has been touched by dozens of hands and has been transformed by centuries of knowledge. It is, quite literally, a global product.

3 Vocabulary

Word	Definition	Example
elaborate	detailed and carefully prepared	<i>She made an elaborate cake.</i>
truffle	a round chocolate sweet	<i>Belgian truffles are famous.</i>
tropical	hot, humid regions near equator	<i>Cocoa grows in tropical climates.</i>
complex	not simple; many parts	<i>The process is surprisingly complex.</i>
labour-intensive	requiring a lot of human work	<i>Harvesting cocoa is labour-intensive.</i>
equator	imaginary line around Earth's middle	<i>Countries near the equator are hot.</i>
supply	total amount available	<i>Global cocoa supply decreased.</i>
pod	large fruit of the cocoa tree	<i>Each pod has about 40 beans.</i>
fragile	easily broken or damaged	<i>Branches are too fragile for machines.</i>
fermentation	chemical process using bacteria/yeast	<i>Fermentation develops the flavour.</i>
yeast	tiny organism for baking/brewing	<i>Yeast is essential in bread-making.</i>
bitter	strong, sharp, unpleasant taste	<i>Dark chocolate can taste bitter.</i>
mould	fungus on damp things / shaped container	<i>Dried to prevent mould.</i>

Word	Definition	Example
liquor	thick paste from ground cocoa	<i>Cocoa liquor is the base.</i>
texture	feel or consistency of substance	<i>Good chocolate has smooth texture.</i>
moulds	containers to give shape	<i>Chocolate is poured into moulds.</i>

Collocations: mass-produced • handmade • raw materials • production line • quality control • supply chain • end product • manufacturing process

4 Grammar: The Passive Voice

□ In the Text, You Saw...

- Present Simple: "Chocolate **is consumed** in enormous quantities."
- Past Simple: "Fermentation **was not fully understood** until the 20th century."
- Present Perfect: "The pods **have been opened**."
- Modal: "The beans **must be turned** regularly."

Passive = be + past participle. The tense of 'be' changes; the past participle stays the same.

Tense	Active	Passive
Present Simple	They grow cocoa.	Cocoa is grown.
Past Simple	They harvested pods.	Pods were harvested.
Present Perfect	They have opened pods.	Pods have been opened.
Past Perfect	They had shipped beans.	Beans had been shipped.
Future (will)	They will distribute it.	It will be distributed.
Present Cont.	They are producing it.	It is being produced.
Modal	They must turn them.	They must be turned.

□ When to Use the Passive

1. Action more important than agent: 'Chocolate is made from cocoa.'
2. Agent unknown: 'My bike was stolen.'
3. Formal/scientific: 'The experiment was conducted.'
4. Agent with by when relevant: 'Pods are harvested by farmers.'

△ Common Mistakes

- "The beans roasted..." → □ "The beans are roasted..." (need "be")
- "Chocolate is make..." → □ "Chocolate is made..." (past participle)
- "My car has been repair." → □ "has been repaired." (past participle)

5 □ Exercise: Active → Passive

Rewrite each active sentence in the passive voice. Keep the same tense.

1. They grow cocoa in West Africa.
→ _____
2. Farmers harvest the pods by hand.
→ _____
3. They roasted the beans at 150 degrees.
→ _____
4. Scientists did not understand fermentation.
→ _____
5. They have shipped the beans to Europe.
→ _____
6. Workers are producing the chocolate now.
→ _____
7. They will distribute the product worldwide.
→ _____
8. You must turn the beans regularly.
→ _____
9. They had packed the beans into sacks.
→ _____
10. Someone stole my chocolate!
→ _____

□ Answers

1. Cocoa is grown in West Africa.
2. The pods are harvested by hand.
3. The beans were roasted at 150 degrees.
4. Fermentation was not understood.
5. The beans have been shipped to Europe.
6. The chocolate is being produced now.
7. The product will be distributed worldwide.
8. The beans must be turned regularly.
9. The beans had been packed into sacks.
10. My chocolate was stolen!

6 □ Comprehension Quiz

1. Where is most cocoa grown?

Answer: West Africa (Ivory Coast and Ghana)

2. Why are pods harvested by hand?

Answer: The trees are too fragile for machines

3. How long does fermentation take?

Answer: 5-7 days

4. What does NOT contain cocoa liquor?

Answer: White chocolate

5. Correct passive of 'They make chocolate from cocoa'

Answer: Chocolate is made from cocoa.

6. Passive of 'They were roasting the beans'

Answer: The beans were being roasted.

7. Which is present perfect passive?

Answer: has been grown

8. Future passive: 'The product ___ next year.'

Answer: will be distributed

7 ➔ Fill in the Blanks

Word box: is consumed • are harvested • were shipped • was built • has not been roasted • will be installed • is being produced • had been completed

1. Chocolate ___ in enormous quantities every year.
2. The pods ___ by hand twice a year.
3. The beans ___ to Europe last month.
4. The factory ___ in 1920.
5. The cocoa ___ yet.
6. New machines ___ next year.
7. The chocolate ___ right now.
8. The order ___ before we arrived.

📌 **Answers:** 1. is consumed • 2. are harvested • 3. were shipped • 4. was built • 5. has not been roasted • 6. will be installed • 7. is being produced • 8. had been completed

8 📌 Speaking & Writing

📌 Discussion Questions

1. What everyday product do you find most fascinating in how it is made?
2. Should consumers know more about the production process?
3. Many cocoa farmers have never tasted chocolate. Does this surprise you?
4. Should products made using child labour be banned?
5. How has manufacturing been changed by automation?

Example Dialogue

A: Do you know how coffee is made?

B: Beans are grown in tropical countries, then are picked by hand.

A: Are they roasted immediately?

B: No, first they are dried in the sun, then shipped to roasting facilities.

A: So beans are processed in several countries?

B: Exactly. A single cup has been touched by dozens of people!

Writing Task

Choose a product (bread, paper, jeans, a smartphone). Write 80-120 words about how it is made:

- Where are raw materials found or grown?
- How are they processed and assembled?
- Where is the final product sold?

Use the passive voice at least 5 times in at least 3 different tenses.

9 Review Checklist

I can now...

- understand an article about how chocolate is manufactured
- use vocabulary related to manufacturing and production
- form the passive voice in all major tenses
- know when and why to use the passive instead of the active
- add the agent with by when necessary
- write a process description using the passive voice



Congratulations!

You have completed Lesson 5: The Passive World.