



Report on the meeting

- Point 1: It was agreed to postpone any final decision on the location of the new headquarters until next year.
- Point 2: Our customers are believed to approve of the new product, though it is hoped that the market research scheduled for next year will confirm this.
- Point 3: It was suggested that the planned employee bonus scheme should be reviewed and it is expected that a final decision will be taken next year.
- Point 4: Another meeting is thought to be planned for next year!

Presentation

We often use reporting verbs in the passive when:

- we do not know or cannot verify the source of the information.
- we assume that the reader or listener is not interested in who the agent or source is.
- the agent or source is obvious from the context.

The structure is very common in formal writing, e.g. newspaper articles, academic essays and business documents, as well as in formal speaking contexts, e.g. academic discussions and business meetings.

Use the passive in two different ways:

1 **It + passive verb + that clause**

It is believed that the painting was sold to a private art collector for \$35 million.

Reporting verbs that commonly follow this pattern are: *agree, allege, announce, assume, believe, claim, consider, decide, estimate, expect, fear, hope, know, presume, report, say, suggest, think, understand.*

Present

It is thought that more people shop online than before.

It is believed that the government is considering an increase in tax.

Past

It was agreed that no decision would be taken yet.

It wasn't reported that anyone had resigned over the mistake.

Future

It is expected that the company will open a one hundred more branches this year.

It is understood that the new director will be appointed in January.

2 **subject + passive verb + to + infinitive**

The company is believed to have been sold for \$20 million.

Present

The winner of the lottery is thought to live in the north west of the country.

The President is believed to be considering the new proposals.

Past

Ten thousand people are known to have taken part in the celebrations.

No one was thought to have been injured.

Future

The new branch is expected to open in January.

The King is said to approve of the plan.

Notice how we use passive reporting verbs with *there*:

It is known that there are still problems with the design.

There are known to be small problems with the design.

Exercises

1 Choose the correct reporting verbs.

- 1 It is *known* / *expected* that man first landed on the moon in 1969.
- 2 The world population is *estimated* / *decided* to be around seven billion.
- 3 It has been *thought* / *announced* that the next election will be on May 8th. That's official.
- 4 The man awaiting trial is *known* / *alleged* to have stolen a car.
- 5 Fossil fuels are *agreed* / *believed* to cause global warming.
- 6 It is *thought* / *considered* that the escaped prisoner will try to leave the country.
- 7 Most applicants are *considered* / *approved* to be too under-qualified for the position.
- 8 The Earth was *expected* / *assumed* to be flat over a thousand years ago.

2 Study the sentences in Exercise 1. Which sentences are reporting the ...

Past: _____, _____ and _____

Present: _____, _____ and _____

Future: _____ and _____

3 Report the information in the first sentence in two different ways. Use the verb in brackets in the passive reporting form.

- 1 'The company was sold off for over a million.' (believe)
It is believed that the company was sold off for over a million.
The company is believed to have been sold off for over a million.
- 2 'Over half of typical household spending goes on rent or a mortgage.' (estimate)
It is _____
Over half _____
- 3 'The electorate will vote for the president again at the next election.' (expect)
It is _____
The electorate _____
- 4 'The criminals stole jewellery worth a fortune.' (claim)
It is _____
The criminals _____
- 5 'Most employees are in favour of more flexible working hours.' (know)
It is _____
Most employees _____
- 6 'The company will launch a new version of the phone by the end of this year.' (expect)
It is _____
The company _____
- 7 'The current CEO is planning his retirement.' (presume)
It is _____
The current CEO _____
- 8 'The hurricane is heading straight for the city.' (fear)
It is _____
The hurricane _____