

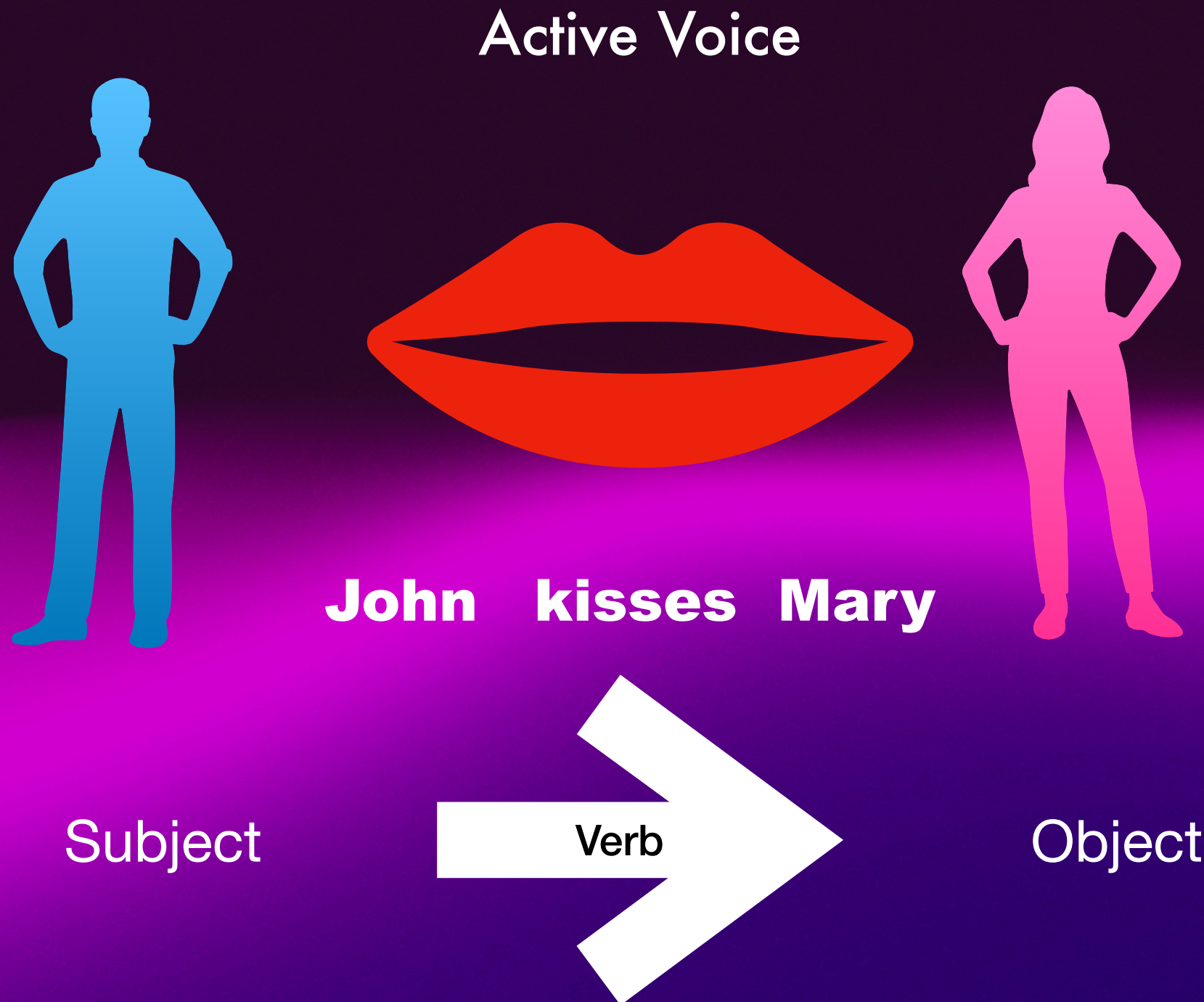
# Passive Voice

Παθητική Φωνή



# A visual presentation of Active Voice

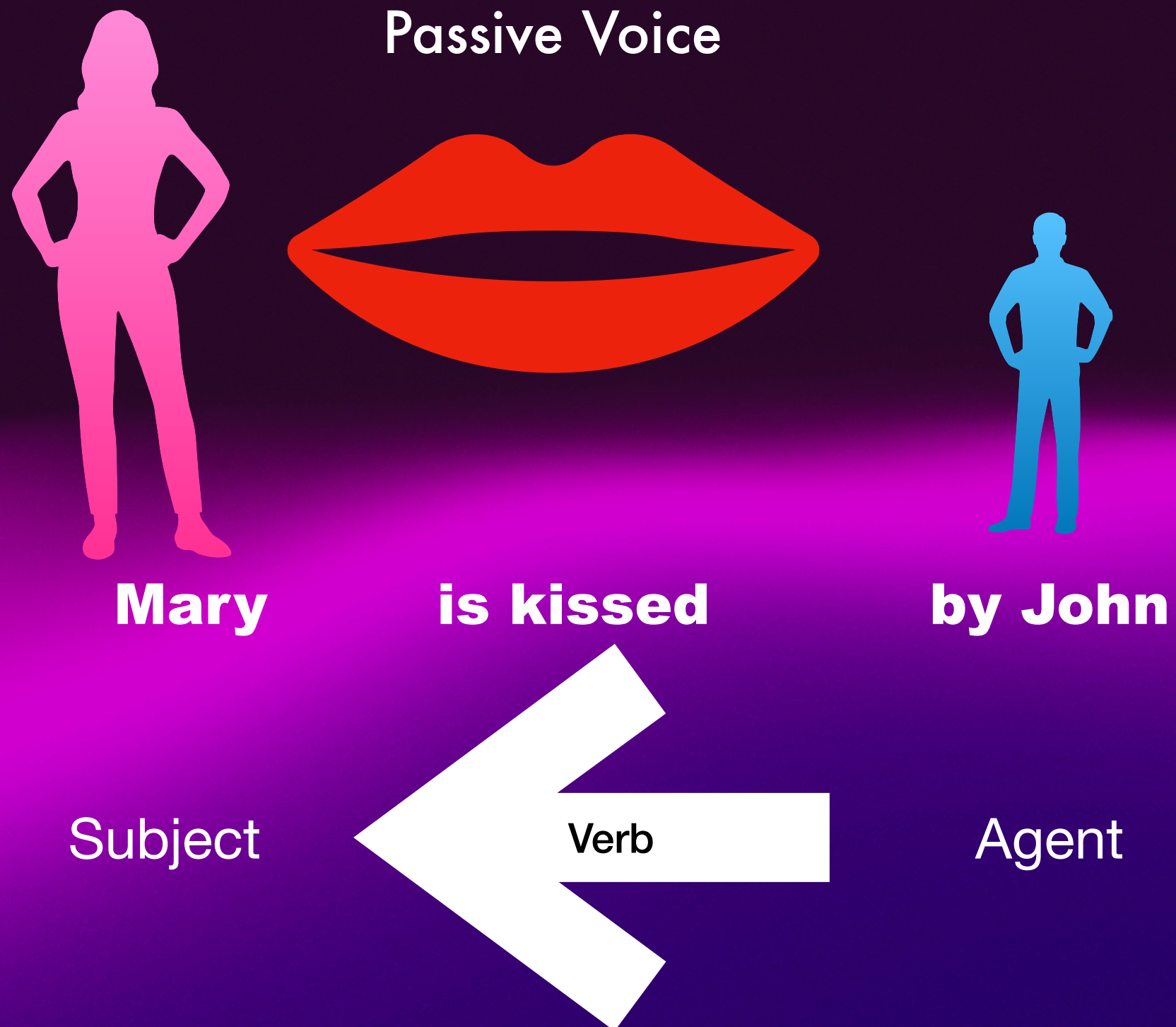
Someone does something. Transitive Verbs. The action “goes” from the subject to the object (Syntax).





# A visual presentation of Passive Voice

Something is done to someone by someone. “What” is done by the agent.



# Why do we use it?

**Emphasis on the action, not who does something, but what is done.**

## **1. The doer of the action is unknown or unimportant:**

- \* The window was broken. (We don't know who broke it.)
- \* Mistakes were made. (We don't want to specify who made them.)

## **2. We want to be more formal or impersonal:**

- \* It is recommended that you arrive early. (More formal than "I recommend that you...")
- \* The report will be submitted next week. (More impersonal than "I will submit the report...")

## **3. We want to avoid assigning blame or responsibility:**

- \* The decision was made. (Avoid saying "I made the decision.")
- \* The rules were broken. (Avoid blaming a specific person.)

## **4. We want to focus on the process or result of an action:**

- \* The car was repaired. (Focuses on the result.)
- \* The experiment was conducted. (Focuses on the process.)



# What do I need to know before I convert a sentence from Active to Passive Voice?

## The verb “be” in all the tenses.

Present Simple: I am

Present Continuous: \* I am being

Past Simple: I was

Past Continuous: \*I was being

Present Perfect Simple: I have been

Past Perfect Simple: I had been

Future Simple: I will be

Future Perfect Simple: I will have been

Modal: I can be

Modal Perfect: I could have been

# Steps to convert a sentence from AV to PV.

## John kisses Mary. —> Mary is kissed by John.

1. Find the verb, the subject and the object of the sentence. (If there isn't an object, probably no PV.)

e.g.: Verb: kisses, Subject: John, Object: Mary

2. Find the tense of the verb.

e.g.: “Kisses” : present simple

3. Begin the sentence with the Object of AV, which will become the Subject of the PV sentence.

e.g.: Mary

4. Add the verb “be” in the appropriate tense.

e.g.: **is** —> Mary is

5. Convert the verb into past participle. (Regular Verbs: verb+ed, Irregular Verbs: 3rd column)

e.g.: Mary is **kissed**

6. If necessary, add the “agent” (by + subject of the AV).

e.g.: Mary is kissed **by John**.

\* Pronouns have to become object pronouns: me, you, him, her, it, us, you, them. However, they are not normally added.

e.g.: He killed a fly. —> A fly was killed (by him).

7. If there is anything else in the main sentence, add it without any changes.

e.g.: Mary is kissed by John on a daily basis.

# All tenses+

**Present Simple:** Mary is kissed by John.

**Present Continuous:** Mary is being kissed by John.

**Present Perfect:** Mary has been kissed by John.

**Past Simple:** Mary was kissed by John.

**Past Perfect:** Mary had been kissed by John.

**Future Simple:** Mary will be kissed by John.

**Future Perfect:** Mary will have been kissed by John.

**Modal:** Mary can be kissed by John.

**Modal Perfect:** Mary could have been kissed by John.

**Be Going to:** Mary is going to be kissed by John.

**Used to:** Mary used to be kissed by John.

# Omitting the agent.

We often omit the agent in passive voice when:

## 1. The agent is unknown:

- The window was broken. (We don't know who broke it.)
- The car was stolen. (The thief is unknown.)

## 2. The agent is obvious or unimportant:

- The letter was mailed yesterday. (It's obvious that someone at the post office mailed it.)
- Dinner is served. (The waiter or cook is implied.)

## 3. We want to focus on the action or the object:

- The report was completed on time. (Focuses on the completion of the report.)
- The house was painted white. (Focuses on the result of the action.)

## 4. We want to be more formal or impersonal:

- It was decided that the meeting would be postponed. (More formal than "We decided...")
- The application form must be submitted by Friday. (More impersonal than "You must submit...")



# Sentences that cannot be written in PV

**Sentences that cannot be written in the passive voice** are those that do not have a direct object. In other words, they lack the necessary structure to be transformed into a passive sentence.


Here are some examples of verbs that cannot be used in the passive voice:

- **Intransitive verbs:** These verbs do not take a direct object. For example:
  - *She **sleeps** peacefully.*
  - *They **laughed** loudly.*
  - *The sun **shines** brightly.*
- **Certain verbs of perception and occurrence:** These verbs often express states of being or events that happen naturally. For example:
  - *I **see** a bird.*
  - *It **rains** heavily.*
  - *The accident **happened** yesterday.*

Remember, the passive voice is formed by making the direct object of the active sentence the subject of the passive sentence. If a sentence doesn't have a direct object, there's nothing to promote to the subject position, and thus, it cannot be transformed into the passive voice.

# Where will I use Passive Voice?

## Realistic use

- To emphasise the action itself when it's important, based on your point of view as a speaker or a writer.
- In formal texts (legal documents etc.)
- In essays (formal)
- In scientific / academic writing 
- When you need to be “impersonal”.

**Don't overuse it!**



# ‘Stranger’ Verbs

## Let, make, help

Active: X **lets** Y **do** something.

Passive: Y **is allowed to do** something (by X).

Active: X **makes** Y **do** something.

Passive: Y **is made to do** something (by X).

Active: X **helps** Y **do** something.

Passive: Y **is helped to do** something (by X).

# Verbs with 2 Objects

**Which one becomes the new subject?**

The teacher gave the tests *to* the students.

S                  V                  O1                  O2

The tests were given to the students (by the teacher).

The teacher gave the students the tests.

S                  V                  O1                  O2

—> The students were given the tests (by the teacher).



# Impersonal & Personal Structures

**It is said that... / Someone is said to...**

People **believe** that **John** **kisses** **Mary**.

- **Impersonal:** **It is believed** that **John** **kisses** **Mary**.

The verb of the main clause changes into passive with “it” as a subject.

- **Personal:** **John is believed to kiss** **Mary**.

The subject of the subordinate clause become the subject of the new sentence. The verb of the main clause becomes passive voice. The verb in the subordinate clause becomes full infinitive\* and the rest remain the same.

# Impersonal & Personal Structures

**It is said that... / Someone is said to...**

People **think** that John steals cars.

Impersonal: **It is thought that** John steals cars.

Personal: John **is thought** to steal cars.

People **thought** that John steals cars.

Impersonal: **It was thought that** John steals cars.

Personal: John **was thought** to steal cars.



# Impersonal & Personal Structures

**It is said that... / Someone is said to...**

People **think** that John stole cars.

Impersonal: **It is thought that** John **stole** cars.

Personal: John **is thought** to have stolen cars.

People **thought** that John stole cars.

Impersonal: **It was thought** that John stole cars.

Personal: John **was thought** to have stolen cars.

**Time for practice.**



1. The teacher explains the lesson.
2. The students write the answers.
3. The chef is cooking dinner.
4. The children are playing in the park.
5. The company has launched a new product.
6. The scientist has discovered a new planet.
7. The police arrested the thief.
8. The gardener planted the flowers.
9. The workers were building the house.
10. The students were studying for the exam.
11. The company had already released the report.
12. The doctor had treated the patient.
13. They will finish the project next week.
14. The company will hire new employees.
15. We will be discussing the proposal tomorrow.
16. The team will be practicing all day.
17. They will have completed the task by Friday.
18. The company will have launched the new product by the end of the year.
19. You should finish your homework.
20. They must submit the report on time.
21. She gave him a book.
22. The teacher taught us English.
23. They sent me a letter.
24. The company offered him a job.
25. She let him take some money.