Passive Voice

Personal/Impersonal Construction

The verbs think, believe, say, report, know, expect, consider, understand etc are used in the following passive patterns in personal and impersonal constructions.

Active:        People believe that he lied in court.
Passive:      1. It is believed (that) he lied in court. (impersonal)
                  It + passive + that-clause
                  2. He is believed to have lied in court. (personal)
                  Subject + passive + to-infinitive

Active:       They expect him to arrive soon.
Passive:     3. It is expected (that) he will arrive soon. (impersonal)
                It + passive + that-clause
                4. He is expected to arrive soon. (personal)
                Subject + passive + to-infinitive

**Present active:**
People believe that Mr Brown ***owns*** a lot of land in the north.
Present personal passive construction:
Mr Brown is believed ***to own*** a lot of land in the north.
**Future active:**People expect that a new law **will be introduced** next year.
Future personal passive construction:
A new law is expected **to be introduced** next year.
**Past active:**People believed that Mr Brown ***owned*** a lot of land in the north.
They thought that the prisoners ***had escaped***.
Present personal passive construction:
Mr Brown was believed ***to have owned*** a lot of land in the north.
The prisoners were thought ***to have escaped***.

Activity: Turn the sentences into the personal or impersonal Passive Construction

1. It is said that this orchestra is the best in the world
This orchestra \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. It is believed that the thieves have left the country.
The thieves \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. The fire is reported to have started by accident.
It \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. He is known to be making a lot of money.
It \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. It is expected that they will arrive in time for dinner
They \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. She is said to know a lot about gardening.
It \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
7. It is thought that he will be attending the meeting.
He \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
8. It is believed that we are able to win the competition.
We \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
9. The company is thought to be making a big profit.
It \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
10. It is reported that the government has reached a decision
The government \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
11. It is said that they were responsible for the damage.
They \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
12. She is expected to break the world record.
It \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.