

In the first example, **drunk** is clearly an adjective because no one would dream of **drunk** as the past participle of a verb in this context (you can't **drink** characters). In the second example, **drunk** is clearly the past participle of the verb **drink** because martinis can't be **drunk** unless someone **drinks** them. At other times the meaning of a sentence does not clearly differentiate an adjective from a past participle:

Lois is frustrated.

Lois may be frustrated **by Clark** (from Clark frustrated Lois), in which case the example sentence is passive (auxiliary BE plus a past participle). Or Lois may be in a state of frustration (verb BE plus an adjective). If you are given a sentence like the last example to analyze, with no contextual clues to help you decide whether **frustrated** is a past participle or an adjective, the best you can do is to indicate that you are aware of both possible analyses.

Sometimes **Get** Is the Auxiliary in a Passive Sentence

Passive sentences normally imply that the logical subject (the core subject) caused something to happen to the grammatical subject (the core object). But passive sentences can also suggest a sense of "becoming." **Get** seems to suggest this sense of becoming more strongly than **BE**. So sometimes you'll find **get** as the auxiliary in a passive sentence rather than **BE**, especially in informal language, in order to emphasize the sense of becoming, as in:

The paper's TV critic panned the World Series telecasts.

The World Series telecasts **were** panned by the paper's TV critic.

OR

The World Series telecasts **got** panned by the paper's TV critic.

Dad chewed out my little brother.

My little brother **was** chewed out by Dad.

OR

My little brother **got** chewed out by Dad.

You Can Make a Passive Sentence Negative or Change It Into a Question

Once you turn a sentence into a passive, you can make it negative or change it into a question, just as if it were a core sentence with an auxiliary BE. Simply place the negative marker **not** after the BE in order to make a negative sentence. Move BE to the front of the sentence to make it a yes/no question, or move both BE and a Wh-word to make a Wh-question.

The communications satellite was recovered by the shuttle crew.

The communications satellite was **not** recovered by the shuttle crew.

Billy the Kid **was** shot by Pat Garrett.

Was Billie the Kid shot by Pat Garrett?

The state's prison-reform movement **was** initiated by **who**.

who **was** the state's prison-reform movement initiated by?

The morinda citifolia plant is treasured by Polynesians **for its medicinal value**.

Why is the morinda citifolia plant treasured by Polynesians?

When You Identify Status, Passive Is the Final Comment

When you identify the status of the main verb of a passive sentence, you normally state that it is passive as the final comment. Here are some variations on a single sentence, with the status identified for each:

The protesting students **were protected** by a police contingent (Past Passive)