Voice and Agency Worksheet: Get Passive, Middle Voice

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NAME

DATE

Remember

Form	Example
Middle voice: active form, passive meaning	This shirt washes well. The book reads easily.
Ergative verbs: same verb, with or without agent	I opened the door. The door opened.
get passive: informal, often negative or unexpected	He got fired. She got stuck in traffic.
have / get + object + participle (experience) · agentless passive to hide responsibility	I had my car broken into. Mistakes were made.

Typical mistakes

× Learners often say	✓ Say instead
This book is selling itself very well.	This book is selling very well.
The door was opened by itself.	The door opened by itself.
He was got fired.	He got fired.

1. Complete

Complete with the correct form of the verb in brackets, choosing active, passive, middle voice or get passive.

1. Her new novel _____ (sell) incredibly well.
2. The ice _____ (melt) quickly in the sun.
3. He _____ (catch) cheating and was expelled.
4. This fabric _____ (not / iron) easily.
5. Suddenly, the lights _____ (go out).
6. The minister admitted that 'mistakes _____ (make)'.
7. I _____ (my bag / steal) on the metro.
8. The meeting _____ (cancel) at the last minute.

2. Choose

Circle the most natural option.

1. The door (opened / was opened) on its own.
2. This car (drives / is driven) beautifully.
3. She (got hurt / was got hurt) playing rugby.
4. The vase (broke / was broken itself) when it fell.
5. Her poems (translate / are translated) well into Spanish.
6. We (got lost / were lost by) in the old town.
7. The price of oil (increased / was increased) sharply. (no agent)
8. He (got himself arrested / arrested himself) at the protest.

3. Correct the mistakes

Each sentence has one mistake. Write it correctly.

1. This book reads itself easily.
2. The window was broken by itself.
3. She was got promoted last year.
4. These shoes are wearing well.
5. The cake was burned itself in the oven.
6. I had stolen my wallet.

Writing

Write two short versions (3 sentences each) of an announcement about a data leak at a company: one that hides responsibility, and one that takes responsibility.

Speaking

- Think of a product that sells well in your country. Why does it sell?
- When did you last get lost, stuck or caught in something?
- Why do politicians and companies like the passive?
- Describe something that broke, opened or stopped suddenly.

Answer key

1. Complete: 1 is selling / sells · 2 melted / melts · 3 got caught · 4 doesn't iron · 5 went out · 6 were made · 7 had my bag stolen · 8 was cancelled / got cancelled

2. Choose: 1 opened · 2 drives · 3 got hurt · 4 broke · 5 translate · 6 got lost · 7 increased · 8 got himself arrested

3. Correct the mistakes: 1 This book reads easily. · 2 The window broke by itself. · 3 She got promoted last year. · 4 These shoes wear well. · 5 The cake burned in the oven. · 6 I had my wallet stolen.

Writing, model answer: Version 1: It has come to our attention that some customer data was accessed. Mistakes were made in the configuration of a server. Steps are being taken to prevent this happening again. Version 2: We made a serious mistake: our team left a server unprotected and an attacker accessed your data. We take full responsibility. We have fixed the problem and we will contact every customer affected.