

Handout: Translating the “Passive” Tenses

In order to understand how to translate the Greek passive tenses into English, we need to remember some basic English grammar. First, let me remind you of the “principal parts” of English verbs. Each English verb can be categorized in terms of four principal parts, each one used to form the different tenses of English. Here are some sample verbs:

Present	Past	Past Participle	Present Participle
speak	spoke	spoken	speaking
write	wrote	written	writing
take	took	taken	taking
throw	threw	thrown	throwing
love	loved	loved	loving
tempt	tempted	tempted	tempting

The “Present Tense” will always use the verb forms under the “Present” principal part (and, for 3s, will add -s/-es): I speak, you speak, he/she/it speaks, etc.


The “Past Tense” will always use the verb forms under the “Past” principal part (with no modifications for 3s): I spoke, you spoke, he/she/it spoke, etc.

The “Present Perfect Tense” will use the auxiliary verb “to have” (in the Present Tense) *plus* the “Past Participle” principal part: I have spoken, you have spoken, he/she/it has spoken, etc.


GREEK PASSIVES:

Now, whenever you’ve identified a verb as being a true passive verb in Greek (not a “deponent” passive), you are going to employ TWO verbal forms in your translation:

A form of TO BE + Past Participle (Ptc) of the English verb



Which form? It depends on the Greek TENSE!



Do I ever not use this? No! Use the Past Ptc to render EVERY passive Greek tense!

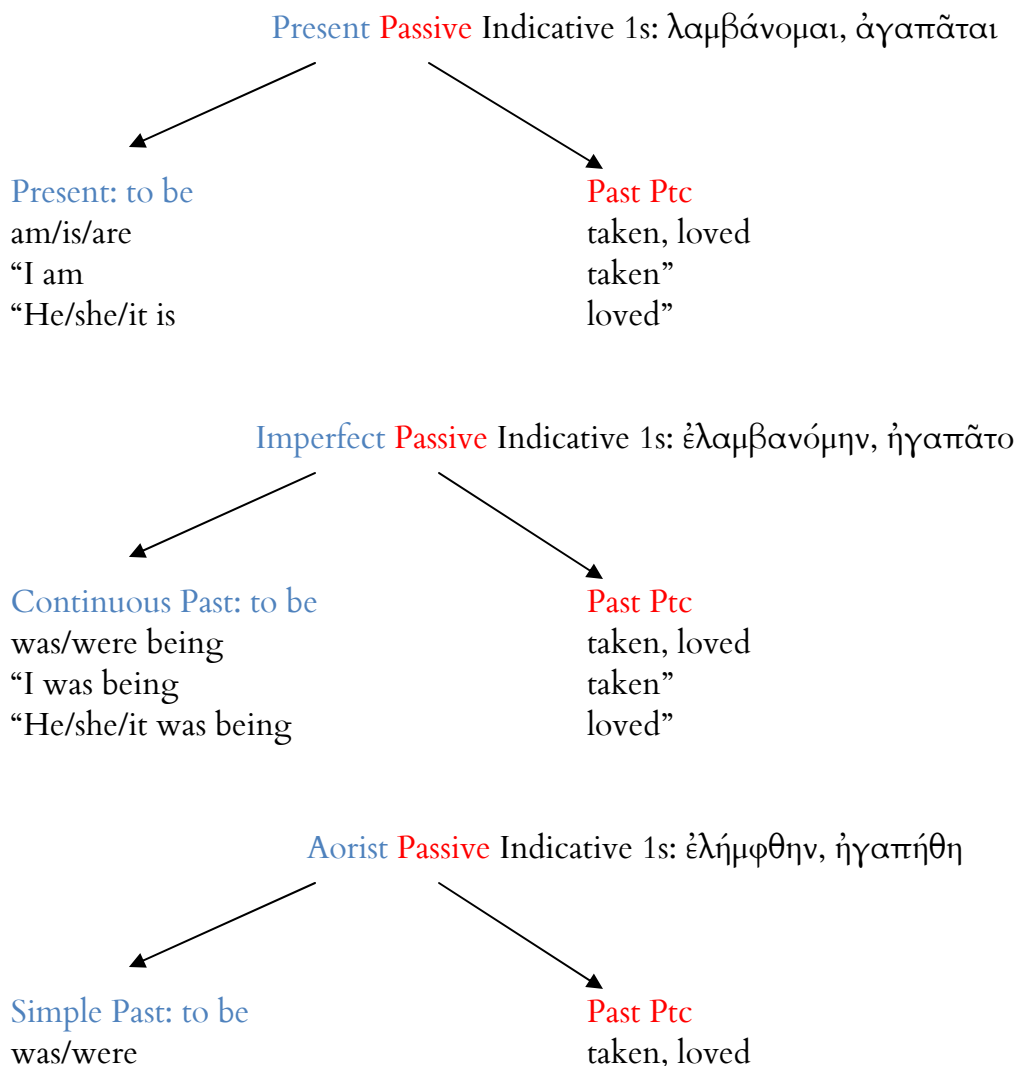
How will I know which form of the verb is the Past Ptc in English? That's very simple: which form of the verb would you plug in here?

I have _____. You have _____.

Instinctively, you know to plug in the third principal part, the Past Ptc:

To speak:	I have spoken .	You have spoken .
To write:	I have written .	You have written .
To take:	I have taken .	You have taken .
To throw:	I have thrown .	You have thrown .
To love:	I have loved .	You have loved .
To tempt:	I have tempted .	You have tempted .

Now, let's walk through the various tenses in which the Greek Passive occurs (thus far):



“I was
“He/she/it was

taken”
loved”

Future **Passive** Indicative 1s: λήμφθῆσομαι, ἀγαπηθήσεται

Future: to be
will be
“I will be
“He/she/it will be

Past Ptc
taken, loved
taken”
loved”

For the sake of completeness, let’s include the Perfect Passive (which you’ll learn in Ch. 25):

Perfect **Passive** Indicative 1s: εἴλημμαι, ἠγάπηται

Present Perfect: to be
have/has been
“I have been
“He/she/it has been

Past Ptc
taken, loved
taken”
loved”