

# 27 The passive with modals

Modal verbs in English can be used in passive forms. As with other passive constructions, the emphasis changes to the object that receives the action.

See also:

Present perfect simple 11 Passive 24

Modal verbs 56

## 27.1 MODALS IN THE PRESENT PASSIVE

Modals in passive forms don't change. The sentence starts with the modal, then the verb "be" plus the past participle.



PRESENT WITH MODAL

You **should tell** Barbara the exciting news!

PRESENT PASSIVE WITH MODAL

Barbara **should be told** the exciting news!

### FURTHER EXAMPLES



**Should** the package **be delivered** to your house or your office?

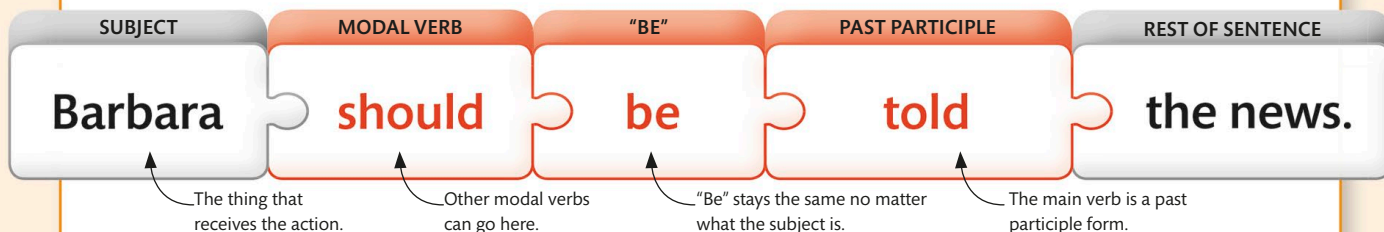


The treasure chest **can only be opened** with a special key.



All new employees **must be shown** what to do if there's a fire.

### HOW TO FORM



## 27.2 MODALS IN THE PERFECT PASSIVE

Modals in perfect tenses can become passive by replacing "have" with "have been."



PERFECT WITH MODAL

The managers **should have given** Daniel more time.

PERFECT PASSIVE WITH MODAL

Daniel **should have been given** more time.

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

We **should have been told** that the concert was canceled!



The robber **would have been arrested** if he hadn't been so quick.



The leaking pipe **might have been fixed** now. Should we ask?



Lots of people think that the fire **could have been prevented**.



### HOW TO FORM

