

Alternatives to passive constructions

In German, you have to use **passive constructions** a lot, but there exist many ways to go around it. There are several simpler or more natural ways to say the same thing.

1. "Man" as subject

Instead of a complicated passive construction, we can use **man**:

- *Man sagt...* It is said that... / One says that...
 - *Man hatte ihn davor gewarnt* = He had been warned in advance / Someone had warned him in advance
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2. With "bekommen / kriegen" to receive something

Some verbs that use the **dative** can replace the passive:

- *Er bekam das Buch geschenkt* = He was offered the book / Someone offered him the book (instead of *Ihm wurde das Buch geschenkt*).
- *Sie kriegte das Geld ausgezahlt* = She received the money (instead of *Ihr wurde das Geld ausgezahlt*).

□ Tip: It's very common to talk about **gifts or payments**.

3. With reflexive verbs (sich + verb)

Some verbs can become reflexive to replace the passive:

- *Mein Verdacht hat sich bestätigt* = My suspicion was confirmed
 - *Das Buch liest sich schnell* = The book can be read quickly
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4. To express the possibility: "sich lassen + infinitive"

- *Das lässt sich leicht ändern* = This can easily be changed
 - *Ein Ende lässt sich nicht absehen* = The end cannot be foreseen
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5. With "kommen + name + zu"

To say that an action will be accomplished/carried out:

- *Die Verhandlungen kommen heute zum Abschluss* = Negotiations will end (verb "abschließen" → noun "der Abschluss")
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6. With "sein + zu + infinitive"

To express **possibility or obligation**:

- *Die Anträge sind im Rathaus abzuholen* = Forms can / must be collected at the town hall
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7. With adjectives ending in **-bar** (possible / impossible)

Some adjectives replace the passive with “kann”:

- *Diese Muscheln sind nicht essbar* = These mussels are not edible
 - *Das Argument ist nicht widerlegbar* = This argument cannot be refuted
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☐ **Tip:**

- If you can use **man**, a **reflective** verb, **sich lassen**, or an adjective ending in **-bar**, you **don't need the complicated passive** form and it sounds much more fluent.
- This makes your sentences more natural and easier to understand.