



Activity: Oetzi the Iceman / Passive Voice

Materials needed: A high-interest article or passage that uses a lot of passive voice. An article is included below.

Description: Students read and discuss an article about a European mummy, Oetzi, found in the 1990s in the thawing ice of the Alps. The article uses a lot of passive voice, primarily in the simple past and present perfect, although there are a few modal passives as well. This article has been abridged from a much longer one, and the web link to the original is included below, as well as a link to photos to warm the class up to the “Iceman.”

Use of this article depends on which point of the passive lesson a class is working on at the moment.

1. Initial grammar discovery: Provide comprehension questions that elicit a passive response. Compare them to questions and answers that require an active-voice response.
2. Identifying the passive: Students read the article searching for uses of the passive. Remind students to look for forms of the *Be* verb, but remind them that not every *Be* verb is part of the passive!
3. Practice: Students discuss why the passive voice is used in various sentences.
4. More practice: Make a jigsaw by dividing the article into Part A and B. One student has the complete Part A with missing information in Part B, and the other student has the complete Part B with missing information in Part A. Students must ask and answer each other’s questions to complete the information.
5. Still more practice: Students change the passive to active where logical.
6. Just one more practice! After the article has been thoroughly read and discussed, the instructor puts key words on the board and the students recreate passive sentences about Oetzi without referring to the article.

Example: *find* -- Oetzi was found in 1991.

Name -- Oetzi was named after a valley in the Alps.



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Oetzi the Iceman

Oetzi the Iceman is the modern nickname of a well-preserved natural mummy of a man from about 3300 BC. The mummy was found in 1991 in a glacier of the Otztal Alps, near the border between Austria and Italy. Oetzi was named after the valley of his discovery. He rivals the Egyptian "Ginger" as the oldest known human mummy, and he has offered a unique view of the habits of Copper Age Europeans.

Oetzi was found by two German tourists on September 19, 1991. The body was at first thought to be a modern corpse, like several others which had recently been found in the area. It was roughly recovered by the Austrian authorities and taken to Innsbruck, where its true age was finally discovered. It is now being displayed at the South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology in Bozen-Bolzano, Italy.

The body has been extensively examined, measured, x-rayed, and dated. Tissues and stomach contents were examined microscopically. Scientists believe that at the time of his death, Oetzi was a 30-to-45-year old man, approximately 160 cm (5'3") tall.

Analysis of pollen and dust grains on his clothing, and analysis of Oetzi's teeth enamel show that his childhood was spent near the present village of Feldthurns, north of Bolzano. He later went to live in valleys about 50 km further north.

The Iceman had 57 tattoos. Some were located on or near acupuncture points that are used today to treat symptoms of digestive problems and osteoarthritis. Interestingly, scientists have found that Oetzi suffered from digestive problems and osteoarthritis. Some scientists believe that these tattoos indicate an early type of acupuncture.

Oetzi's clothes include a cloak, vest, and shoes. They were quite sophisticated. The cloak was woven from grass, and the vest was made of leather.

The shoes were waterproof and wide. They seemed to be designed for walking across the snow; they were constructed of bearskin, deer hide, and tree bark. Soft grass was wrapped around the foot and also placed in the shoe. The grass functioned like warm socks. Recently, the shoes were reproduced by experts. They are of such excellent quality, that there are plans for them to be made commercially.

Other items found with the Iceman include a copper axe, flint knife, and a bow and quiver of arrows.

Additionally, Oetzi carried two species of mushrooms. One of these mushrooms is known to have antibacterial properties, and was likely used for medical purposes.



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Researchers believe Oetzi may have been involved in a fight. Injuries from the fight may have killed him. A DNA analysis revealed traces of blood from four other people on his gear: one from his knife, two from the same arrowhead, and a fourth from his coat.

A CAT scan revealed that an arrowhead was stuck in Oetzi's shoulder when he died. The arrow shaft had been removed, but the arrowhead had been left inside his body. He also had bruises and cuts on his hands, wrists, and chest.

From such evidence, and an examination of his weapons, molecular biologist Thomas Loy from the University of Queensland believes that Oetzi and his companions were hunters who fought with a rival group. At some point, he may have carried (or been carried by) a companion. He may have been weakened by blood loss. As a result, Oetzi apparently put down his equipment neatly against a rock, lay down, and died.

His body was covered by thousands of years of ice and snow until his recent discovery. Pieces of his clothing, his hair, his skin, and his personal possessions were well-preserved because of the cold temperatures.

This article has been abridged and slightly simplified from an article appearing at <http://www.crystalinks.com/oetzi.html>. It has had a few more passives added to it. Link to this article to show your class pictures of the mummy.

This website has a few pictures including a recreation of how Oetzi might have looked in life. <http://www.hominides.com/html/ancetres/otzi.htm> (The site is in French, but the photos are self-explanatory.)