

Catherine's Grammar Explanation:
Continuous Passives

Catherine:

Hello Guy! You seem to have got the right idea: when Elena arrived at the restaurant, the waiters were already serving dinner. Elena used a past continuous passive sentence to talk about this. She said:

Elena: dinner was being served.

So, how do we make a passive continuous sentence? Let's look at the active form first. Here's Elena:

Elena: the waiters were serving dinner.

This sentence starts with a **subject** – the waiters. Then, we have 'were serving'. This is the **continuous** form of the verb - made with 'to be' plus an -ing verb, Finally we have the object – dinner. Listen again:

Elena: the waiters were serving dinner.

So: subject – the waiters; past continuous verb – were serving; and object – dinner.

But if we want, we can put the **object** at the **beginning** of the sentence, like this:

Elena: dinner was being served.

Now this is a continuous passive sentence, and it works like this. The **object** goes **first**. Then, the verb '**to be**' – present or past: for example, is, was were etcetera.

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Then you need to say **being**. That's b-e-i-n-g, being. It makes the verb continuous. And after that, you need the past participle of the verb. In Elena's sentence, the verb is serve, so it's serve, served, served. Listen again:

Elena: dinner was being served.

Did you catch it? **Object, verb to be, being, past participle**. This is a continuous passive sentence. But where's the subject? Well, you can add it to the end of the sentence like this:

Elena: dinner was being served by the waiters.

Ok, that's all from me. Good luck with your grammar challenge!