Verb Phrase: Passive Be

So far we have seen that the verb phrase consists of the following elements:

VP➔ (Aux) V

where

$$Aux \rightarrow \begin{Bmatrix} (M)(Have_{en})(Be_{ing}) \\ Do^{*} \end{Bmatrix}$$

There's one more element though, i.e.:

$$Aux \rightarrow \begin{Bmatrix} (M)(Have_{en})(Be_{ing})\boxed{(Be_{en})} \\ Do^{*} \end{Bmatrix}$$

This last item, another form of the verb be is called "passive be" and is used to form sentence of that include what is referred to as "passive voice." Like $have_{en}$ and be_{ing}, be_{en} affects the verb following it by turning that verb into the *passive* form. Thus for instance the sentence

I saw him in a store.

Can be turned into a passive sentence as follows:

He was seen in a store.

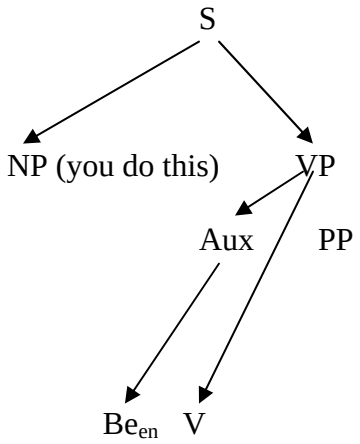
And the following sentences:

1. The student examined the book .
2. The article in the paper described many ways of using carbon fibres.
3. The geese ate the grass on the lawn.

Can be turned into passive versions as follows:

1. The book was examined by the student.
2. Many ways of using carbon fibres were described by the article in the paper.
3. The grass on the lawn was eaten by the geese.

The process of diagramming these sentences is not dramatically different relative to those examined in our discussion of the previous verbal elements, i.e.:



1. The field was examined by the boy.

(we'll diagram the ones below in class)

2. Many ways of using carbon fibers were described by the article in the paper.

3. The grass on the lawn was eaten by the geese.

Homework:

Diagram the following sentences completely.

1. The students on the bus in the school's parking lot are going to a trade exhibition at some center in Pembroke.
2. They have been warned about their behaviour.
3. You might have been to a similar exhibition.
4. This homework should be completed by Monday.
5. The last question on an exercise like this one is often difficult.