

Passive 1 (is done / was done)

A

Study this example:

This house **was built** in 1961.**Was built** is *passive*.

Compare active and passive:

Somebody **built** this house in 1961. (*active*)

subject object

This house **was built** in 1961. (*passive*)

subject

When we use an active verb, we say *what the subject does*:

- ☐ My grandfather was a builder. **He built** this house in 1961.
- ☐ It's a big company. **It employs** two hundred people.

When we use a passive verb, we say *what happens to the subject*:

- ☐ 'How old is this house?' '**It was built** in 1961.'
- ☐ **Two hundred people are employed** by the company.

B

When we use the passive, who or what causes the action is often unknown or unimportant:

- ☐ A lot of money **was stolen** in the robbery. (somebody stole it, but we don't know who)
- ☐ **Is this room cleaned** every day? (does somebody clean it? – it's not important who)

If we want to say who does or what causes the action, we use **by**:

- ☐ This house was built **by my grandfather**.
- ☐ Two hundred people are employed **by the company**.

C

The passive is **be (is/was etc.) + past participle (done/cleaned/seen etc.)**:

(be) done (be) cleaned (be) damaged (be) built (be) seen etc.

For irregular past participles (**done/seen/known** etc.), see Appendix 1.Study the active and passive forms of the *present simple* and *past simple*:*Present simple**active* **clean(s) / see(s)** etc.Somebody **cleans** this room every day.*passive* **am/is/are + cleaned/seen** etc.This room **is cleaned** every day.

- ☐ Many accidents **are caused** by careless driving.
- ☐ I'm **not invited** to parties very often.
- ☐ How **is** this word **pronounced**?

*Past simple**active* **cleaned/saw** etc.Somebody **cleaned** this room yesterday.*passive* **was/were + cleaned/seen** etc.This room **was cleaned** yesterday.

- ☐ We **were woken** up by a loud noise during the night.
- ☐ 'Did you go to the party?' 'No, I **wasn't invited**.'
- ☐ How much money **was stolen** in the robbery?

42.1 Complete the sentences using one of these verbs in the correct form, present or past:

cause	damage	hold	invite	make
overtake	show	surround	translate	write

- Many accidents are caused by dangerous driving.
- Cheese is made from milk.
- The roof of the building was damaged in a storm a few days ago.
- You weren't invited to the wedding. Why didn't you go?
- A cinema is a place where films are shown.
- In the United States, elections for president are held every four years.
- Originally the book was written in Spanish, and a few years ago it was translated into English.
- Although we were driving fast, we were not surrounded by a lot of other cars.
- You can't see the house from the road. It is hidden by trees.

42.2 Write questions using the passive. Some are present and some are past.

- Ask about glass. (how / make?) How is glass made?
- Ask about television. (when / invent?) When was television invented?
- Ask about mountains. (how / form?) How were mountains formed?
- Ask about antibiotics. (when / discover?) When were antibiotics discovered?
- Ask about silver. (what / use for?) What is silver used for?

42.3 Put the verb into the correct form, present simple or past simple, active or passive.

- It's a big factory. Five hundred people are employed (employ) there.
- Did somebody clean (somebody / clean) this room yesterday?
- Water covers (cover) most of the earth's surface.
- How much of the earth's surface is covered (cover) by water?
- The park gates are locked (lock) at 6.30 p.m. every evening.
- The letter was sent (send) a week ago and it (arrive) yesterday.
- The boat hit a rock and sank (sink) quickly. Fortunately everybody was rescued (rescue).
- Robert's parents died (die) when he was very young. He and his sister were brought up (bring up) by their grandparents.
- I was born in London, but I grew up (grow up) in Canada.
- While I was on holiday, my camera was stolen (steal) from my hotel room.
- While I was on holiday, my camera disappeared (disappear) from my hotel room.
- Why did Sue resign (Sue / resign) from her job? Didn't she enjoy it?
- Why was Ben fired (Ben / fire) from his job? Did he do something wrong?
- The company is not independent. It is owned (own) by a much larger company.
- I saw an accident last night. Somebody called (call) an ambulance but nobody needed (not / need).
- Where are these pictures taken (these pictures / take)? In London?
- Sometimes it's quite noisy living here, but it's not a problem for me – I am not bothered (not / bother) by it.

42.4 Rewrite these sentences. Instead of using **somebody, they, people** etc., write a passive sentence.

- Somebody cleans the room every day. The room is cleaned every day.
- They cancelled all flights because of fog. All flights were cancelled because of fog.
- People don't use this road much. This road is not used much.
- Somebody accused me of stealing money. I was accused of stealing money.
- How do people learn languages? How are languages learned?
- People warned us not to go out alone. We were warned not to go out alone.

Passive 2 (be done / been done / being done)

Study the following active and passive forms:

A

*Infinitive*active (to) **do/clean/see** etc.Somebody **will clean** this room later.passive (to) **be + done/cleaned/seen** etc.This room **will be cleaned** later.

- ☐ The situation is serious. Something must **be done** before it's too late.
- ☐ A mystery is something that can't **be explained**.
- ☐ The music was very loud and could **be heard** from a long way away.
- ☐ A new supermarket is going **to be built** next year.
- ☐ Please go away. I want **to be left** alone.

B

*Perfect infinitive*active (to) **have + done/cleaned/seen** etc.Somebody **should have cleaned** the room.passive (to) **have been + done/cleaned/seen** etc.The room **should have been cleaned**.

- ☐ I should have received the letter by now. It might **have been sent** to the wrong address.
- ☐ If you had locked the car, it wouldn't **have been stolen**.
- ☐ There were some problems at first, but they seem **to have been solved**.

C

*Present perfect*active **have/has + done** etc.The room looks nice. Somebody **has cleaned** it.passive **have/has been + done** etc.The room looks nice. **It has been cleaned**.

- ☐ Have you heard? The trip **has been cancelled**.
- ☐ **Have** you ever **been bitten** by a dog?
- ☐ 'Are you going to the party?' 'No, I **haven't been invited**.'

*Past perfect*active **had + done** etc.The room looked nice. Somebody **had cleaned** it.passive **had been + done** etc.The room looked nice. **It had been cleaned**.

- ☐ The vegetables didn't taste good. They **had been cooked** too long.
- ☐ The car was three years old, but **hadn't been used** very much.

D

*Present continuous*active **am/is/are + (do)ing**Somebody **is cleaning** the room at the moment.passive **am/is/are + being (done)**The room **is being cleaned** at the moment.

- ☐ There's somebody walking behind us. I think we **are being followed**.
- ☐ (in a shop) 'Can I help you?' 'No, thanks. I'm **being served**.'

*Past continuous*active **was/were + (do)ing**Somebody **was cleaning** the room when I arrived.passive **was/were + being (done)**The room **was being cleaned** when I arrived.

- ☐ There was somebody walking behind us. I think we **were being followed**.

Exercises

43.1 What do these words mean? Use **it can ...** or **it can't ...**. Use a dictionary if necessary.

If something is

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 washable, <u>it can be washed</u> | 4 unusable, _____ |
| 2 unbreakable, it _____ | 5 invisible, _____ |
| 3 edible, _____ | 6 portable, _____ |

43.2 Complete these sentences with the following verbs (in the correct form):

arrest carry cause ~~do~~ make repair ~~send~~ spend wake up

Sometimes you need **have** (**might have**, **should have** etc.).

- The situation is serious. Something must be done before it's too late.
- I should have received the letter by now. It might have been sent to the wrong address.
- A decision will not _____ until the next meeting.
- Do you think that more money should _____ on education?
- This road is in very bad condition. It should _____ a long time ago.
- The injured man couldn't walk and had to _____.
- I told the hotel receptionist I wanted to _____ at 6.30 the next morning.
- If you hadn't pushed the policeman, you wouldn't _____.
- It's not certain how the fire started, but it might _____ by an electrical fault.

43.3 Rewrite these sentences. Instead of using **somebody** or **they** etc., write a passive sentence.

- Somebody has cleaned the room.
The room has been cleaned.
- Somebody is using the computer right now.
The computer _____
- I didn't realise that somebody was recording our conversation.
I didn't realise that _____
- When we got to the stadium, we found that they had cancelled the game.
When we got to the stadium, we found that _____
- They are building a new ring road round the city.

- They have built a new hospital near the airport.

43.4 Make sentences from the words in brackets. Sometimes the verb is active, sometimes passive.

- There's somebody behind us. (I think / we / follow) I think we're being followed.
- This room looks different. (you / paint / the walls?) Have you painted the walls?
- My car has disappeared. (it / steal!) It _____
- My umbrella has disappeared. (somebody / take) Somebody _____
- Sam gets a higher salary now. (he / promote) He _____
- Ann can't use her office this week. (it / redecorate) It _____
- There was a problem with the photocopier yesterday, but now it's OK.
(it / work) It _____ again. (it / repair) It _____
- When I went into the room, I saw that the table and chairs were not in the same place.
(the furniture / move) The _____
- A neighbour of mine disappeared six months ago. (he / not / see / since then)
He _____
- I wonder how Jane is these days. (I / not / see / for ages)
I _____
- A friend of mine was mugged on his way home a few nights ago. (you / ever / mug?)
