

Unit 42

Passive 1 (is done / was done)

A Study this example:



This house was built in 1935.

Was built is *passive*.

Compare active and passive:

Somebody built **this house** in 1935. (*active*)
subject *object*

This house was built in 1935. (*passive*)
subject

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

- My grandfather was a builder. He **built** this house in 1935.
- It's a big company. It **employs** two hundred people.

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

- This house is quite old. It **was built** in 1935.
- 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 often **invited** to parties.
- 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 _____ from milk.
- The roof of the building _____ in a storm a few days ago.
- You _____ to the wedding. Why didn't you go?
- A cinema is a place where films _____.
- In the United States, elections for president _____ every four years.
- Originally the book _____ in Spanish, and a few years ago it _____ into English.
- Although we were driving quite fast, we _____ by a lot of other cars.
- You can't see the house from the road. It _____ 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?) _____
- Ask about mountains. (how / form?) _____
- Ask about Pluto (*the planet*). (when / discover?) _____
- Ask about silver. (what / use 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 _____ (cover) most of the earth's surface.
- How much of the earth's surface _____ (cover) by water?
- The park gates _____ (lock) at 6.30 p.m. every evening.
- The letter _____ (post) a week ago and it _____ (arrive) yesterday.
- The boat hit a rock and _____ (sink) quickly. Fortunately everybody _____ (rescue).
- Richard's parents _____ (die) when he was very young. He and his sister _____ (bring up) by their grandparents.
- I was born in London, but I _____ (grow up) in Canada.
- While I was on holiday, my camera _____ (steal) from my hotel room.
- While I was on holiday, my camera _____ (disappear) from my hotel room.
- Why _____ (Sue / resign) from her job? Didn't she enjoy it?
- Why _____ (Bill / sack) from his job? What did he do wrong?
- The company is not independent. It _____ (own) by a much larger company.
- I saw an accident last night. Somebody _____ (call) an ambulance but nobody _____ (injure), so the ambulance _____ (not / need).
- Where _____ (these photographs / take)? In London? _____ (you / take) them, or somebody else?
- Sometimes it's quite noisy living here, but it's not a problem for me – I _____ (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 _____
- People don't use this road much. _____
- Somebody accused me of stealing money. I _____
- How do people learn languages? How _____
- Somebody warned us not to go out alone. _____

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

A Study the following active and passive forms:

Infinitive

active: (to) do/clean/see etc.

Somebody will clean **the room** later.

passive: (to) be + done/cleaned/seen etc.

The 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 haven't received the letter yet. It might have been sent to the wrong address.
- If you hadn't left the car unlocked, 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 concert 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 very 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, thank you. 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. We were being followed.

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 haven't received the letter. 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 _____.
- It's not certain how the fire started, but it might _____ by an electrical fault.
- I told the hotel receptionist I wanted to _____ at 6.30 the next morning.
- If you hadn't pushed the policeman, you wouldn't _____.

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.
- They have postponed the meeting. The _____
- Somebody is using the computer at the moment.
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 at the moment. (it / redecorate) It _____
- The photocopier broke down yesterday, but now it's OK. (it / work / again ; it / repair)
It _____ It _____
- When I went into the room, I saw that the table and chairs were not in the same place.
(the furniture / move) The _____
- The man next door 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?)
