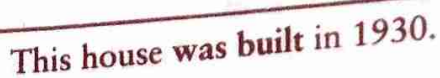


Passive (1) (is done / was done)

Study this example:



'Was built' is *passive*. Compare active and passive:

Somebody **built** this house in 1930. (active)
subject *object*

This house **was built** in 1930. (*passive*)
subject

We use an *active* verb to say *what the subject does*:

- My grandfather was a builder. He **built** this house in 1930.
- It's a big company. It **employs** two hundred people.

● It's a big company. It employs two hundred people.
We use a *passive* verb to say *what happens to the subject*:

- This house is quite old. **It was built** in 1930.
- **Two hundred people are employed** by the company.

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.

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

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

For irregular past participles (*done/known/seen* 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?

EXERCISES

41.1 Complete the sentences using one of these verbs in the correct form:

cause damage hold include invite make overtake show
translate write

- Many accidents are caused by dangerous driving.
- Cheese from milk.
- The roof of the building in a storm a few days ago.
- There's no need to leave a tip. Service in the bill.
- 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.
- We were driving along quite fast but we by lots of other cars.

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

- Ask about the telephone. (when/invent?) When was the telephone invented?
- Ask about glass. (how/make?) How
- Ask about Australia. (when/discover?)
- Ask about silver. (what/use for?)
- Ask about television. (when/invent?)

41.3 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.
- Water (cover) most of the Earth's surface.
- Most 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 (sink) quickly but fortunately everybody
..... (rescue).
- Ron'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 the north of England.
- 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?

41.4 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 very often.
- Somebody accused me of stealing money. I
- How do people learn languages? How
- People advised us not to go out alone.