

## The Passive

44 Listen and repeat. Then act out.



- We form the passive with the verb 'to be' and the past participle of the main verb.

The letter **was written** by Tim.

Study the following examples to see how the passive is formed in the present simple and past simple:

	Active	Passive
Present Simple	Jack waters the plants.	The plants <b>are watered</b> by Jack.
Past Simple	Tina sent the email.	The email <b>was sent</b> by Tina.
Interrogative		Negative
Are the plants watered every week? Was the email sent by Tina?		The plants <b>aren't watered</b> every week. The email <b>wasn't sent</b> by Tina.

When changing a sentence from the active to the passive:

- the object of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence.
- the active verb changes into a passive form. (to be + past participle)
- the subject of the active sentence becomes the agent and is either introduced with the preposition **by** or omitted.

	subject	verb	object
Active	George	fed	the dog.
Passive	The dog	was fed	by George.

We use the **passive**:

- when the agent (the person who does the action) is unknown, unimportant or obvious from the context.

My wallet **was stolen** yesterday. (unknown agent)

The house **is cleaned** twice a week. (unimportant agent)

The thief **was arrested**. (by the police – obvious agent)

- when the agent is one of the following words: **people, one, someone/somebody, they, he, etc.**

They **published** the report last week.

The report **was published** last week.

## 1 Circle the correct word.

1 Coffee **is** / **are** made from coffee beans.

2 Cola **is** / **are** drunk by millions of people around the world.

3 *Great Expectations* **was** / **is** written by Charles Dickens.

4 This ring **was** / **were** given to me as a gift.

5 Foreign languages **is** / **are** taught in every school.

6 Our car **was** / **is** washed every week.

2 Fill in the gaps with **is**, **are**, **was** or **were**.

1 *Macbeth* ... **was** ... written by Shakespeare.

2 Fiat cars ..... made in Italy.

3 Tamara and José ..... invited to a party last week.

4 Our flat ..... cleaned every week.

5 The telephone ..... invented by Alexander Graham Bell.

6 The World Cup ..... held every four years.

7 The Parthenon ..... visited by thousands of tourists every year.

8 A short story competition ..... organised every year.

9 The castle ..... destroyed by a fire in the fifteenth century.

10 Dinner ..... served at 7 o'clock every evening.



## Guess What

In teams, choose an object. Describe it to the other team and see if they can guess which one it is.

- paper / write in
- metal / open doors
- plastic / measure things
- rubber / erase things
- wood / write with
- leather / carry papers



Team A, Student A: It is made of paper and it is used for writing in.

Team B, Student A: Is it a notebook?

Team A, Student A: Yes, it is.

3 Match the words in the columns and make sentences using the past passive as in the example:

A	B	C
The film <i>ET</i>	paint	Vincent van Gogh
The Golden Gate Bridge	build	Lewis Carroll
Radium	direct	Steven Spielberg
<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>	discover	Joseph Baermann Strauss
<i>The Starry Night</i>	write	Marie and Pierre Curie

1 *The film *ET* was directed by Steven Spielberg.*

2 .....

3 .....

4 .....

5 .....

4 Rewrite the sentences in the passive form.

1 James Joyce wrote this book.

*This book was written by James Joyce.*

2 They deliver the post every day.

.....

3 Birds eat seeds.

.....

4 A storm destroyed three houses in the neighbourhood.

.....

5 They built the school in 1956.

.....

6 Does she cook dinner every night?

.....

7 Did Nicky wash the dishes?

.....

8 Ben didn't steal Johnny's bag.

.....

9 They found the missing painting.

.....

10 Fiona takes the dog for a walk every day.

.....

5 Put the newspaper headlines in the passive.

1 FIRE DESTROYED  
LOCAL LIBRARY

2

QUEEN OPENS  
NEW SCIENCE MUSEUM

3

TSUNAMI HIT  
COASTAL VILLAGE

4 FISHERMAN SAVED TEENAGER

5 FACTORY POLLUTES RIVER

1 *The local library was destroyed by a fire.*

2 .....

3 .....

4 .....

5 .....