Unit **42**

Passive 1 (**is done / was done**)

A Study this example:



This house **was built** in 1981.

'This house **was built**' is *passive*.

Compare active and passive:

Somebody **built** this house in 1981. *(active)*
subject *object*

This house **was built** in 1981. *(passive)*
subject

When we use an *active* verb, we say *what the subject does*:
- My grandfather was a builder. **He built** this house in 1981.
- 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 1981.'
- **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.

The *past participle* often ends in **-ed** (clean**ed**/damag**ed** etc.), but many important verbs are *irregular* (**built**/**done**/**stolen** etc.). See Appendix 1.

Compare active and passive, *present simple* and *past simple*:

Present simple

active: **clean(s)** / **see(s)** etc.

passive: **am**/**is**/**are** + **cleaned**/**seen** etc.

Somebody **cleans** this room every day.

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.

passive: **was**/**were** + **cleaned**/**seen** etc.

Somebody **cleaned** this room yesterday.

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?

Passive 2–3 → **Units 43–44** **by** → **Unit 128**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

ACTIVITY 1: Put the verbs in brackets into the Present Passive form of the verbs in brackets.

1. Many accidents (cause) _____ by careless driving.
2. Cheese (make) _____ from milk.
3. A cinema is a place where films(show) _____ .
4. This plant is very rare, it (find) _____ in very few places.
5. In Argentina, elections for president (hold) _____ every four years.
6. You can't see the house from the road. It (surround) _____ by trees.

ACTIVITY 2: Put the verbs in brackets into the Past Passive form of the verbs in brackets.

1. The roof of the building (damage) _____ in a storm a few days ago.
2. You (invite) _____ to the party. Why didn't you go?
3. Although we were driving fast, we (overtake) _____ by a lot of other cars.
4. There was an accident last night, but fortunately nobody (injure) _____ .
5. I never received the letter,it (send) _____ to the wrong address.

ACTIVITY 3: Choose the correct alternative,

1. Two hundred people ***are employed / employs*** the company.
2. Water ***covers / is covered*** most of the earth's surface.
3. While I was on holiday, my camera ***stole / was stolen*** from my hotel room.
4. Robert's parents ***died / were died*** when he was very young.
5. The boat hit a rock and ***sank / was sunk*** quickly.
6. It can be noisy living here, but it ***does not bother / is not bothered*** me.
7. I haven't seen these flowers before. What ***are they called / do they call***?

LIVEWORKSHEETS