

PASSIVE VOICE

How do we form the PASSIVE VOICE?

We form passive verbs with the different tenses of **be** (e.g. **is, was**) + **past participle**.

Present simple:	Am/are/is + past participle The office is cleaned every evening.
Past simple:	Was/were + past participle My car was stolen last night.

Compare these active and passive sentences:

Active: Someone **cleans** the office every evening.

Passive: the office **is cleaned** every evening.



Note that the object of an active verb (the office) becomes the subject of a passive verb.

When do we use it?

- We often use the passive when we do not know who or what does something.
My car **was stolen** last night. (I do not know who stole the car.)
- We also use the passive when we are not interested in who or what does something.
This house **was built** in 1795.

In these sentences we are interested in the house, not who built the house.

- We also use the passive when we do not want to say who or what does something. Compare:

Active: I **made** a mistake.

Passive: A mistake **was made**.



EXERCISES:

1 Complete the sentences. Use the present simple passive of the verbs in brackets.

Example: Bread *is made* (make) from wheat.

- Football _____ (play) all over the world.
- Millions of cars _____ (export) from Japan every month.
- A compass _____ (use) for showing direction.
- How many languages _____ (speak) in Switzerland?

2 Use the past simple passive of the verbs in brackets.

Example: President John F. Kennedy *was assassinated* (assassinate) in Dallas in 1963.

- a) The Tower of London _____ (build) at the beginning of the eleventh century.
- b) The 1986 World Cup for soccer _____ (play) in Mexico.
- c) When _____ (television/invent)?
- d) The first pyramids of Egypt _____ (build) around 3000 bc.
- a) We didn't go to the party on Saturday because we _____
(not/invite).

3 Choose the correct form: active or passive.

Example: A valuable painting ~~stole~~/*was stolen* from the Central Art Gallery late last night.

The thieves ~~entered~~/*were entered* the gallery through a small upstairs window.

- 1. Walt Disney *created* / *was created* the cartoon character Mickey Mouse.
- 2. This problem *discussed* / *was discussed* at the last meeting.
- 3. In 1964 Martin Luther King *won* / *was won* the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1968 he *assassinated* / *was assassinated* in Memphis, Tennessee.
- 4. The factory *produces* / *is produced* millions of cars every year and most of them *export* / *are exported*.
- 5. How *is the hero described* / *does the hero describe* ?
- 6. His *book* *made* / *was made* into a film last year.
- 7. The main character *tells* / *is told* the story.