# The Passive

17

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 **are watered** by Jack. |
| **Past Simple** | Tina sent the email. | The email **was sent** by Tina. |

| Interrogative | Negative |
|---|---|
| Are the plants watered every week?<br>Was the email sent by Tina? | The plants aren't watered every week.<br>The email wasn't sent by Tina. |

**When changing a sentence from the active to the passive:**

a **the object of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence.**
b **the active verb changes into a passive form. (to be + past participle)**
c **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:**

1 **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)

2 **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.



LIVEWORKSHEETS

# 17 The Passive

## 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.

## GAME 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.



LIVEWORKSHEETS

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

| A | B | C |
|---|---|---|
| The film *ET* | paint | Vincent van Gogh |
| The Golden Gate Bridge | build | Lewis Carroll |
| Radium | direct | Steven Spielberg |
| *Alice in Wonderland* | discover | Joseph Baermann Strauss |
| The *Starry Night* | 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 .....



LIVEWORKSHEETS