Unit 42

Passive 1 (is done / was done)

A

Study this example:



This house **was built** in 1961.

Was built is *passive*.

Compare active and passive:

Somebody **built** this house in 1961. *(active)*
subject *object*

This house **was built** in 1961. *(passive)*
subject

When we use an active verb, we say *what the subject does:*

- My grandfather was a builder. **He built** this house in 1961.
- 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 1961.'
- **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.

For irregular past participles (**done/seen/known** 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 invited** to parties very often.
- 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** in the robbery?

Passive 2–3 → Units 43–44 By → Unit 128

Unit 43

Passive 2 (be done / been done / being done)

Study the following active and passive forms:

A

Infinitive

active (to) **do/clean/see** etc. — Somebody **will clean** this room later.

passive (to) **be** + **done/cleaned/seen** etc. — This room **will be cleaned** later.

- The situation is serious. Something must **be done** before it's too late.
- A mystery is something that can't **be explained**.
- The music was very loud and could **be heard** from a long way away.
- A new supermarket is going **to be built** next year.
- Please go away. I want **to be left** alone.

B

Perfect infinitive

active (to) **have** + **done/cleaned/seen** etc. — Somebody **should have cleaned** the room.

passive (to) **have been** + **done/cleaned/seen** etc. — The room **should have been cleaned**.

- I should have received the letter by now. It might **have been sent** to the wrong address.
- If you had locked the car, it wouldn't **have been stolen**.
- There were some problems at first, but they seem **to have been solved**.

C

Present perfect

active **have/has** + **done** etc. — The room looks nice. Somebody **has cleaned** it.

passive **have/has been** + **done** etc. — The room looks nice. It **has been cleaned**.

- Have you heard? The trip **has been cancelled**.
- **Have** you ever **been bitten** by a dog?
- 'Are you going to the party?' 'No, I **haven't been invited**.'

Past perfect

active **had** + **done** etc. — The room looked nice. Somebody **had cleaned** it.

passive **had been** + **done** etc. — The room looked nice. It **had been cleaned**.

- The vegetables didn't taste good. They **had been cooked** too long.
- The car was three years old, but **hadn't been used** very much.

D

Present continuous

active **am/is/are** + **(do)ing** — Somebody **is cleaning** the room at the moment.

passive **am/is/are** + **being (done)** — The room **is being cleaned** at the moment.

- There's somebody walking behind us. I think we **are being followed**.
- *(in a shop)* 'Can I help you?' 'No, thanks. I**'m being served**.'

Past continuous

active **was/were** + **(do)ing** — Somebody **was cleaning** the room when I arrived.

passive **was/were** + **being (done)** — The room **was being cleaned** when I arrived.

- There was somebody walking behind us. I think we **were being followed**.

Passive 1, 3 → Units 42, 44

Unit 44

Passive 3

A I was offered ... / we were given ... etc.

Some verbs can have two objects. For example, **give**:

- Somebody gave **the police** (*object 1*) **the information** (*object 2*). (= somebody gave the information to the police)

So it is possible to make two passive sentences:

- **The police** were given the information. *or*
  The information was given to the police.

Other verbs which can have two objects are:

ask **offer** **pay** **show** **teach** **tell**

When we use these verbs in the passive, most often we begin with the *person*:

- **I've been offered** the job, but I don't think I'll accept it. (= they have offered me the job)
- **You will be given** plenty of time to decide. (= we will give you plenty of time)
- I didn't see the original document but **I was shown** a copy. (= somebody showed me)
- Tim has an easy job – **he's paid** a lot of money to do very little. (= they pay him a lot)

B I don't like being ...

The passive of **doing/seeing** etc. is **being done / being seen** etc. Compare:

active I don't like **people telling me** what to do.
passive I don't like **being told** what to do.

- I remember **being taken** to the zoo when I was a child.
  (= I remember somebody taking me to the zoo)
- Steve hates **being kept** waiting. (= he hates people keeping him waiting)
- We managed to climb over the wall without **being seen**. (= without anybody seeing us)

C I was born ...

We say '**I was** born ...' (*not* I am born):

- I **was born** in Chicago.
- Where **were** you **born**? (*not* Where are you born?) } *past*

but

- How many babies **are born** every day? *present*

D Get

You can use **get** instead of **be** in the passive:

- There was a fight at the party, but nobody **got hurt**. (= nobody **was** hurt)
- I don't **get invited** to many parties. (= I**'m** not invited)
- I'm surprised Liz **didn't get offered** the job. (= Liz **wasn't offered** the job)

We use **get** only when things *happen*. For example, you cannot use **get** in these sentences:

- Jessica **is liked** by everybody. (*not* gets liked – this is not a 'happening')
- Peter was a mystery man. Very little **was known** about him. (*not* got known)

We use **get** mainly in informal spoken English. You can use **be** in all situations.

We also use **get** in the following expressions (which are not passive in meaning):

get married, **get divorced**
get lost (= not know where you are)
get dressed (= put on your clothes)
get changed (= change your clothes)

Passive 1–2 → Units 42–43

Unit 45

It is said that ... He is said to ... He is supposed to ...

A

Study this example situation:



George is very old. Nobody knows exactly how old he is, but:

It is said that he is 108 years old.

or He **is said to be** 108 years old.

Both these sentences mean: 'People say that he is 108 years old.'

You can use these structures with a number of other verbs, especially:

alleged **believed** **considered** **expected** **known** **reported** **thought** **understood**

Compare the two structures:

- Cathy loves running.
  It is said that she runs ten miles a day. *or* She **is said to run** ten miles a day.
- The police are looking for a missing boy.
  It is believed that the boy is wearing a white sweater and blue jeans. *or* The boy **is believed to be wearing** a white sweater and blue jeans.
- The strike started three weeks ago.
  It is expected that the strike will end soon. *or* The strike **is expected to end** soon.
- A friend of mine has been arrested.
  It is alleged that he hit a policeman. *or* He **is alleged to have hit** a policeman.
- The two houses belong to the same family.
  It is said that there is a secret tunnel between them. *or* There **is said to be** a secret tunnel between them.

These structures are often used in news reports. For example, in a report about an accident:

- **It is reported that** two people were injured in the explosion. *or* Two people **are reported to have been injured** in the explosion.

B

(Be) supposed to

Sometimes **(it is) supposed to** ... = (it is) said to ... :

- I want to see that film. It**'s supposed to be** good. (= it is said to be good)
- Fireworks **are supposed to have been invented** in China. Is it true?

But sometimes **supposed to** has a different meaning. We use **supposed to** to say what is intended, arranged or expected. Often this is different from the real situation:

- The plan **is supposed to be** a secret, but everybody seems to know about it.
  (= the plan is intended to be a secret)
- What are you doing at work? You**'re supposed to be** on holiday.
  (= you arranged to be on holiday)
- Our guests **were supposed to come** at 7.30, but they were late.
- Jane **was supposed to phone** me last night, but she didn't.
- I'd better hurry. I**'m supposed to be meeting** Chris in ten minutes.

You're **not supposed to** do something = it is not allowed or advisable:

- You**'re not supposed to park** your car here. It's private parking only.
- Jeff is much better after his illness, but he**'s** still **not supposed to do** any heavy work.

Unit 46

Have something done

A

Study this example situation:



LISA

The roof of Lisa's house was damaged in a storm. So she called a builder, and yesterday a man came and repaired it.

Lisa **had** the roof **repaired** yesterday.

This means: Lisa arranged for somebody else to repair the roof. She didn't repair it herself.

We use **have something done** to say that we arrange for somebody else to do something for us. Compare:

- Lisa **repaired** the roof. (= she repaired it herself)
  Lisa **had** the roof **repaired**. (= she arranged for somebody else to repair it)
- 'Did you **make** those curtains yourself?' 'Yes, I enjoy making things.'
  'Did you **have** those curtains **made**?' 'No, I made them myself.'

B

Be careful with word order. The *past participle* (**repaired**/**cut** etc.) is after the *object*:

	have	*object*	*past participle*
Lisa	**had**	the roof	**repaired** yesterday.
Where did you	**have**	your hair	**cut**?
Your hair looks nice. Have you	**had**	it	**cut**?
Our neighbour has just	**had**	a garage	**built**.
We are	**having**	the house	**painted** this week.
How often do you	**have**	your car	**serviced**?
I think you should	**have**	that coat	**cleaned**.
I don't like	**having**	my picture	**taken**.

C

Get something done

You can also say '**get** something done' instead of '**have** something done':

- When are you going to **get the roof repaired**? (= have the roof repaired)
- I think you should **get your hair cut** really short.

D

Sometimes **have something done** has a different meaning. For example:

- Paul and Karen **had their bags stolen** while they were travelling.

This does not mean that they arranged for somebody to steal their bags. 'They **had their bags stolen**' means only: 'Their bags were stolen'.

With this meaning, we use **have something done** to say that something happens to somebody or their belongings. Often what happens is not nice:

- Gary **had** his nose **broken** in a fight. (= his nose was broken)
- Have you ever **had** your bike **stolen**?