

Activity Type

Reading and writing activity

Language Focus

Past simple active and passive forms

Aim

To practice past simple active and passive forms.

Preparation

Make one copy of the two worksheets for each student.

Level

Intermediate (B1)

Time

40 minutes

Overview

Here is an engaging set of reading and writing activities based on the news to help students practice past simple active and passive forms. Students begin by rewriting past simple active sentences in the passive. After that, students read a news story and identify past simple passive sentences from the story, which they then change to their active form. Students then complete a set of news reports in the past simple passive. Finally, pairs of students create their own news story with the past simple passive and read them to the class.

Answer key

Exercise A - Answer Key

2. Four goals were scored by both teams.
3. The story was written by a reporter.
4. Japan was hit by an earthquake.

Exercise E - Answer Key

News Report 1

The diamond that **was found** in Bangkok last week **was sold** to a businessman from Dubai. A huge sum of money **was paid** to the man who found the diamond. The sewers of Bangkok **were overrun** with prospectors looking to change their fortunes.

News Report 2

In the Manchester United versus Barcelona match last night, four goals **were scored** by both teams. Rooney **was sent off** for kicking another player. However, most people who watched the match said that a better game **was played** by Manchester United.

News Report 3

Japan **was hit** by a 9.1 earthquake yesterday and a large tsunami **was generated**. Ten cities **were affected** and communications **were disrupted**. Fifty thousand residents **were evacuated** within four hours of being alerted, but five evacuation centers **were destroyed**. The roads **were ruined** making evacuation difficult.

A: Rewrite the sentences in the past simple passive.**Active****Passive**

1. Gerald found a diamond.

A diamond was found by Gerald.

2. Both teams scored four goals.

3. A reporter wrote the story.

4. An earthquake hit Japan.

B. Read the news story.**Huge Diamond Found in Bangkok Sewer System**

The largest recorded diamond ever discovered was unearthed beneath the streets of Bangkok last week. A 375-karat diamond was stumbled upon by a team of maintenance workers cleaning out the sewer lines last Friday night. According to witnesses, the diamond was found by a man called Gerald. "I was walking through the sludge when suddenly I tripped over an obstacle and fell flat on my face. When I reached down to remove the object, I noticed it had a very fine surface, almost like glass, but it was so heavy I thought that maybe it was a piece of concrete. When I looked at it close to the light, I couldn't believe my eyes", he is reported to have told his boss. Gerald was immediately taken back to his company's headquarters where the account of his story was confirmed. The head office of Gerald's company was inundated with friends and family wanting to know more about the diamond. After hearing media reports of his finding, Gerald fled Bangkok, not wanting to draw too much attention to himself. Attempts to find Gerald by police and local authorities have been unsuccessful. The diamond was reported to have been purchased by an unknown buyer from Dubai, going by the name of Mr. T. After collecting the diamond from Gerald, a private jet was chartered to fly Mr. T back to Dubai. The sewers of Bangkok have since been overrun with prospectors looking to follow the fortunes of Gerald.

C. Identify and write down four past simple passive sentences from the news story.

Example: A 375-karat diamond was stumbled upon by a team of maintenance workers cleaning out the sewer lines last Friday night.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

D. Rewrite the sentences from exercise C in their active form.

Example: A team of maintenance workers cleaning out the sewer lines last Friday night stumbled upon a 375-karat diamond.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

E. Complete the news reports in the past simple passive and then practice reading the reports with a partner.**News Report 1**

The diamond that _____ (find) in Bangkok last week _____ (sell) to a businessman from Dubai. A huge sum of money _____ (pay) to the man who found the diamond. The sewers of Bangkok _____ (overran) with prospectors looking to change their fortunes.

News Report 2

In the Manchester United versus Barcelona match last night, four goals _____ (score) by both teams. Rooney _____ (send) off for kicking another player. However, most people who watched the match said that a better game _____ (play) by Manchester United.

News Report 3

Japan _____ (hit) by a 9.1 earthquake yesterday and a large tsunami _____ (generate). Ten cities _____ (affect) and communications _____ (disrupt). Fifty thousand residents _____ (evacuate) within four hours of being alerted, but five evacuation centres _____ (destroy). The roads _____ (ruin) making evacuation difficult.

F. With your partner, create your own news report with the past simple passive and then read it to the class.