96 The passive (1)

Santiago Calatrava designed the Alamillo Bridge in Seville. It was opened in 1992.

1 Present simple and past simple

We make the passive of the present and past simple with *is/are/was/were* + the past participle. The object of an active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence:

They ***opened*** *the bridge in 1992.* (active, *bridge* = the object)

The bridge ***was opened*** *in 1992.* (passive, *bridge* = the subject)

	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
present simple	*We make cheese from milk.* *The farmer grows wheat crops in this field.* *We don't allow children in the restaurant.* *Does anyone ever wash these windows?*	*Cheese is made from milk.* *Wheat crops are grown in this field.* *Children aren't allowed in the restaurant.* *Are these windows ever washed?*
past simple	*Europeans found the temple in 1813.* *They didn't open the bridge until 1992.* *Did the postman deliver the letters yesterday?* *When did they discover it?*	*The temple was found in 1813.* *The bridge wasn't opened until 1992.* *Were the letters delivered yesterday?* *When was it discovered?*

⚠ We don't make passives from verbs that don't have objects (e.g. *come, arrive, happen, wait*):
✗ ~~*I was grown up in a small village.*~~ ✓ ***I grew up*** *in a small village.*

⚠ *Born* is always passive:
✗ ~~*My brother born in 1995.*~~ ✓ *My brother* ***was born*** *in 1995.*

2 Use

We usually use an active verb when we are interested in the person who does the action:
Santiago Calatrava ***designed*** *the Alamillo Bridge.*

We use a passive verb

- when we are more interested in the action than the person who did it:
  The bridge ***was opened*** *in 1992.*
- when we don't know the person:
  Julia's handbag ***was stolen.*** (We don't know who stole it.)
- when the action is a law or rule:
  Smoking ***is not allowed*** *in this building.*

3 Passive + *by*

We can say:
Santiago Calatrava designed *the bridge.* or *The bridge* ***was designed by Santiago Calatrava.***