6 Company and community

- passive structures
- reported speech

6.3 Grammar The passive and reported speech

The passive

1 **In small groups, role-play a meeting between angry stakeholders and a company spokesperson. Take turns to be the spokesperson.**

Stakeholders: using the notes provided, remind the spokesperson of all the allegations about the company's lack of social responsibility. Use active verbs to specify who is responsible and give your accusations more impact.

1 Town's water-supply deliberately polluted.
Your factory deliberately pollutes our town's water-supply!
2 Toxic products manufactured, risk to workers' health.
3 Salary increases promised, but still not paid.
4 *Redundancies anticipated, plans for compensation?*
5 Local suppliers paid very late, sometimes never paid.
6 Enormous salaries paid to managers, but no investment in local community.
7 Child labour used by suppliers.
8 Local company taxes not paid.
9 Pension fund used to buy Chinese competitor, nothing left to pay future retirees.
10 Factory could be relocated to Eastern Europe to cut costs.

Spokesperson: using the notes provided, acknowledge what is true in the allegations, but avoid taking responsibility. Use the passive to avoid saying who is responsible.

1 The factory's activity does affect the water-supply, but R&D is developing solutions.
Unfortunately it's true that the water-supply is sometimes affected, but solutions are now being developed.
2 We do manufacture some restricted products, but we respect all government safety procedures.
3 The HR manager did discuss salary increases, but the CEO has not confirmed them yet.
4 We will have to make some redundancies, but we will compensate workers who lose their jobs.
5 We have occasionally delayed payments, but we have always paid our suppliers.
6 We have to offer top salaries to keep the best managers, they invest a lot of money in the local economy.
7 Our suppliers employ young adults, but they have not employed children since 2010.
8 We paid most of last year's tax bill, and the mayor has agreed to postpone payment of the rest.
9 We did buy a Chinese company last year, but the Board plan to sell it again soon at a profit.
10 We are discussing a possible relocation, but we won't take a decision until next year.

Reported speech

2 **With your books closed, try to remember as much as possible of what the spokesperson said.**

He/She said that the water-supply was sometimes affected, but that solutions were being developed.

Refresh your memory

The passive

be + past participle

it does	→	*it is done*
it is doing	→	*it is being done*
it did	→	*it was done*, etc.

used when the person who does the action is obvious or unknown

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Reported speech

I've finished!
He said he had finished.

direct	→	reported
present	→	past
past	→	past / past perfect
present perfect	→	past perfect
will	→	*would*

when you report what someone said, move the original tense back in time

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