SECTION 1 · READ

The Antikythera Mechanism:

The 2,000-Year-Old Greek Computer

Tip: read once for the story, once for the highlighted vocabulary, and once out loud.

It is the spring of 1900, and a storm is pushing a small Greek boat toward a rocky island called Antikythera. The captain decides to wait there until the weather calms down. His crew are **sponge divers** — men who spend their lives collecting sponges from the sea floor. While they wait, one of them dives into the cold water. A few minutes later, he shoots back up to the surface, pale and shaking. He says he has seen a pile of dead bodies down there. Of course, he hasn't. Those "bodies" are bronze and marble statues, resting in an ancient **shipwreck** about 45 meters (150 feet) under the sea. The divers will soon pull out incredible treasures. But the strangest object is not beautiful at all. It is an ugly **lump** of **corroded** metal, and for years nobody pays attention to it. Nobody knows that hidden inside, after more than 2,000 years, are **gears**.

The Treasure Nobody Wanted

Over the next year, divers and Greek authorities recovered statues, jewelry, coins and pottery from the sea. The ship was probably a cargo vessel sailing toward Rome in the first century BC, loaded with Greek treasures. The wreck was found by accident, and the strange lump was taken to a museum in Athens, together with the statues.

Everybody looked at the statues. Almost nobody looked at the lump. Then, in 1902, an archaeologist named Valerios Stais noticed something odd: the lump had cracked open, and inside it there was a wheel with tiny, perfect teeth. It was a gear!

That made no sense. Ancient Greeks, experts believed, did not build machines like this. For decades, scientists could not **figure out** what the object was. Some thought it was a clock. Others said it was a navigation tool. Nobody was sure.

A Computer Made of Bronze

In the 1970s, X-rays showed what was hiding inside the lump. Later, in the 2000s, powerful 3D scans revealed even more — including about 3,500 tiny Greek letters, a kind of instruction manual written on the machine itself.

Here is what scientists discovered. The device was about the size of a shoebox, and it contained at least 30 bronze gears. When you turned a small **hand crank**, the gears moved dials on the front and back. Those dials showed the position of the Sun and the Moon, the phases of the Moon, and a calendar. It could even predict eclipses, those special moments when the Moon hides the Sun, or when the Earth's shadow darkens the Moon. One small dial counted the years between the Olympic Games.

Some details are amazing. The Moon does not move at a constant speed in the sky, so the designers copied this with a tiny pin that slides inside a slot. This idea is so clever that experts still admire it. The mechanism was built more than 2,000 years ago, but in some ways it was **ahead of its time**.

Who Built It — and Why Is There Nothing Else Like It?

Here is the biggest mystery: nobody knows who built it. Some historians point to Hipparchus, a famous Greek astronomer. Others think of the school of Archimedes in Syracuse, or the island of Rhodes, a famous center of science. Every **clue** we have is only a small piece of the puzzle.

And there is a second question. If the Greeks could make this, why have we never found a second one? Nothing so complex appears again until the astronomical clocks of medieval Europe, more than a thousand years later. Some experts believe other machines existed, but bronze was valuable, and people melted old objects to make new ones. The Antikythera Mechanism survived only because it fell into the sea.

The story is not finished. In 2021, a research team proposed a new model of how the front of the machine could have shown the planets. Only about a third of the original machine survives, so each new idea is a little like solving a puzzle with most of the pieces missing. Today, the fragments are kept at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, still waiting for their final answer.

That is the magic of history: sometimes the most important object in the treasure is the one everybody ignored.

SECTION 2 · VOCABULARY GLOSSARY

Word	Say it	En español	Everyday example
sponge divers NOUN	*/spónch dáivers/*	buzos de esponjas	"The sponge divers came up with their bags full."
shipwreck NOUN	*/ship-rek/*	naufragio; restos de un barco hundido	"After the party, my kitchen looked like a shipwreck."
lump NOUN	*/lámp/*	trozo, masa	"I found a lump of clay in the garden."
corroded ADJECTIVE	*/ko-ró-did/*	corroído	"The old keys were corroded and stuck in the lock."
gears NOUN	*/guírs/*	engranajes; las "marchas" de una bici o un auto	"My bike has 21 gears, but I only use three."
figure out PHRASAL VERB	*/fí-guiur áut/*	descubrir, entender	"I can't figure out how to connect to the Wi-Fi."
hand crank NOUN	*/jánd krank/*	manivela	"The old radio works with a hand crank."
ahead of its time EXPRESSION	*/ajéd ov its táim/*	adelantado a su época	"That app was ahead of its time, but nobody wanted to pay for it."
clue NOUN	*/klú/*	pista, indicio	"Do you have any clue where my keys are?"

SECTION 3 · GRAMMAR: THE PASSIVE VOICE

"It was found": the passive voice made easy

Did you notice sentences like *"The wreck **was found** by accident"* or *"It **was built** more than 2,000 years ago"*? This is the **passive voice** (*voz pasiva*). You use it when the action is more important than the person who did it — or when we don't know who did it, just like in our mystery!

Fórmula: **was / were + past participle** (participio pasado)

- The statues **were taken** to Athens. » *Las estatuas fueron llevadas a Atenas.*
- The lump **was taken** to a museum. » *La masa fue llevada a un museo.*
- It **was built** in ancient Greece. » *Fue construido en la antigua Grecia.*

Truco para hispanohablantes: en español muchas veces decimos "se encontró" o "se construyó". En inglés, esa idea casi siempre se dice con **was/were + participio**: "It was found" = "Se encontró". ¡Ya lo usas sin darte cuenta!

Your turn: find two more passive sentences in the story and underline them. Then write one passive sentence about something from your own day.

SECTION 4 · 45-SECOND SHADOWING WORKOUT

Listen to the audio on the website, then read **out loud at the same time**. Stress the **highlighted** words and make a tiny pause at each /.

Deep **beneath** the **Aegean** Sea / sponge divers **uncovered** a heavily **corroded** lump of **bronze.** / Inside rested a two-thousand-year-old **secret:** / **gear** wheels that **accurately** tracked the **stars.**

1. Listen at 0.75x **2.** Read along (shadowing) **3.** Try normal speed (1.0x) and match the rhythm!