



## Video 6 – Real Vocabulary: is it acceptable to say *comprised of*?

Hi there! What is the correct way to use the verb *comprise*, and can we say that something *is comprised of* other things?

Let's have a look at these two sentences:

"The development comprises 50 houses and 75 apartments."

"The development is comprised of 50 houses and 75 apartments."

Now, both sentences are correct, but it's fair to say that *comprise* can be a difficult word to use. Some people claim that you should not use the preposition *of* with *comprise* – and that's true when the verb is in the *active* form: it would be incorrect to say "The development comprises OF 75 apartments".

But when *comprise* is used passively, as in our second sentence, the problem disappears. Some traditionalists insist that it's wrong to use expressions like "is comprised of". But there is no real basis for this idea: this pattern has been common since the 18th century, and our corpus includes thousands of examples of it.

The clue to this is that *comprise* has two distinct meanings – as shown in the Macmillan Dictionary entry. It can mean "to consist of or be formed of" (as in "the development comprises 50 houses"). And it can also mean "to make up or constitute", and this meaning is what you'd see in a sentence like: "Migrants from the EU comprise about 8% of the population". And the passive version of *this* meaning – in the form "be comprised of" – is what we find in "The development is comprised of 50 houses".

So *the development comprises* and *the development is comprised of* are equally acceptable.

In my next video I will discuss the etymological fallacy, the belief that a word should only be used in its original meaning.

Thanks for watching!