

## ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

### Verbs and Voice

- **Voice** is the form a verb takes to indicate whether the subject of the verb performs or receives the action.

There are two types of voice:

1. **Active Voice.**
2. **Passive Voice.**

### ACTIVE VOICE

Active voice – indicates that the subject of the verb is acting, because the subject does or “acts upon” the verb in such sentences, the sentences are said to be in the **active voice**.

Active voice is all about what the subject does.

**Active Voice = sub + v + obj**

These examples show that the **subject** is doing the verb’s action.

- The dog jumped onto the boy.

The boy (**subject**) is doing the jumping (**verb**).

- Kristy will give a book report to the class.

Kristy (**subject**) is doing the giving (**verb**).

- The Computer ate my paper.

The computer (**subject**) is doing the eating (**verb**).

### PASSIVE VOICE

In a **passive voice sentences**, the subject and object flip-flop. The subject becomes the passive recipient of the action, because the subject is being “acted upon” (or is passive), such sentences are said to be in the **passive voice**.

Passive voice, normally the focus is on the action.

**Passive Voice = Object + verb3 + by sub**

### Very common rules

- Bring the object first.

- Choose the correct 'be' verb.
- Change verb into participle.
- Add by + subject.

Example: She helps him.

He is helped by her.

These examples show the subject being acted upon by the verb.

- **Look, how subject and object change**

Subject	Object
• I	Me
• We	Us
• You	You
• They	Them
• He	Him
• She	Her
• Child	Child
• Book	Book

- The boy was jumped on by the dog.

Boy (*subject*) was being jumped on (*verb*).

- A book report will be given by Kristy to the class.

Report (*subject*) will be given (*verb*.)

- My paper was eaten by the computer.

Paper (*subject*) was being eaten (*verb*.)

- If there are two Objects: **Use any one.**

She told **us a story.**

**We** were told a story by her.

**A story** was told to us by her.

They appointed **him an ambassador.**

**He** was appointed an ambassador.

**An ambassador** was appointed to him.

**Has/ have/ had/ is/ am/ are/ was/ were/ + to + v1**

She has to help us.

*We have to be helped by her.*

We have to learn English.

*English has to be learnt by us.*

I had to wait the bus.

*The bus had to be waited by me.*

**Has, have, had to + Verb1 = has, have, had + to be + Verb3**

### MODAL AUXILIARY VERBS

- Can, could, shall, should, may, might, will, would, must.

= modal + be + Verb3

Examples:

She can speak Chinese.

Chinese **can be spoken** by her.

We must preserve the tigers.

Tigers **must be preserved.**

- Must have, should have, could have, might have, would have + Verb3.

Must have, should have, could have, might have, would have + been + Verb3

Examples:

He should have stolen my pen.

My pen should have been stolen by him.

They must have left any sign.

Any sign must have been left.

- No need to add 'by + sub' if the subject is:

We, they, someone, somebody, none, nobody, everybody, people, etc.

Examples:

They have stolen my pen.

My pen has been stolen.

They must have left any sign.

Any sign must have been left.

### Negative sentences remain negative.

They have not stolen my pen.

My pen has not been stolen.

They must not have left any sign.

Any sign must not have been left.

Nobody has done homework.

Homework has not been done.

### Look at the following tenses

#### Present tense:

1. Simple present tense.

#### Active:

Subject + Verb1/ Verb<sub>s</sub> + Object.

#### Passive:

Object + is/am/are + Verb3 + by sub.

Examples:

She writes beautiful poems (Active).

Beautiful poems are being written by her (Passive).

2. Present continuous tense.

#### Active:

Subject + is/am/are + Verb1 + ing + Object.

#### Passive:

Object + is/am/are + being + Verb3 + by sub.

Examples:

She is cooking rice (Active).

Rice is being cooked by her (Passive).

3. Present perfect tense.

**Active:**

Subject + has/have + Verb3 + Object.

**Passive:**

Object + has/have + been + Verb3 + by sub.

Examples:

He has done homework (Active).

Homework has been done by him (passive).

4. Present perfect continuous tense.

**Active:**

Subject + has/have + been + Verb 1 + ing + Object.

**Passive:**

Not commonly used.

**Past tense:**

1. Simple past tense.

**Active:**

Subject + Verb2 + Object.

**Passive:**

Object + was/were + Verb3

Examples:

She wrote beautiful poems (Active).

Beautiful poems were written by her.

2. Past continuous tense.

**Active:**

Subject + was/were + Verb1 + ing

**Passive:**

Object + was/were +being + Verb3

Examples:

She was cooking rice (Active).

Rice was being cooked by her (passive).

### 3. Past perfect tense.

**Active:**

Subject + had + Verb3

**Passive:**

Object + had + been + Verb3

Examples:

He had done homework (Active).

Homework had been done by him (Passive).

### 4. Past perfect continuous tense.

**Active:**

Subject + had + been + Verb1 + ing

**Passive:**

Not used commonly.

## **Future tense**

### 1. Simple future tense

**Active:**

Subject + will/shall + Verb1

**Passive:**

Object + will/shall + be +Verb3

Examples:

She will write beautiful poems (Active).

Beautiful poems will be written by her (Passive).

## 2. Future continuous tense

### **Active:**

Subject + will/shall + be + verb1 + ing

### **Passive:**

Not common in passive.

## 3. Future perfect tense

### **Active:**

Subject + will/shall + have + Verb3

### **Passive:**

Object + will/shall + have + been + Verb3

Examples:

He will have done homework (Active).

Homework will have been done by him (Passive).

## 4. Future perfect continuous tense.

### **Active:**

Subject + will/shall + have + been + verb1 + ing

### **Passive:**

Not used commonly

## Passive of 'Yes / No' question

Can you speak English?

Can English be spoken by you?

Has he helped them?

Have they been helped by him?

Did you help him?

Was he helped by you?

**Do/does + subject + verb1 + object = Is/ am/ are +object + verb3**

**Did + subject + verb1 + object = Was/ were + object + verb3**

Examples:

Are they planting trees?

Are trees being planted?

Did they tell anything?

Was anything told?

Will he bring the book?

Will the book be brought by him?

Did they tell you?

Were you told?

Passive of who question

Who opened the door?

Who was the door opened by?

By whom was the door opened?

**Who + be + object + verb3 + by**

**By whom + be + object + verb3**

Passive of imperative / let

Open the door?

Let the door be opened.

**Let + object + be + verb3**

Let him open the door?

Let the door be opened by him.

**Let + object + be + verb3 + by subject**

Voice change: some examples

Did you teach us?

Were we taught by you?

She has to prepare food.



Food has to be prepared by her.

Who told you about the accident?

By whom were you told the accident?

People are destroying the jungle.

The jungle is being destroyed.

### REASONS TO USE THE ACTIVE VOICE.

- Most writers prefer to use active voice because it is more direct.

Compare:

Active: The waiter dropped the tray of food.

Passive: The tray of food was dropped by the waiter.

- The active voice is less awkward and clearly states relationship between subject and action.

**Compare:**

Active: Your request for funding has been denied by the review committee.

Passive: The review committee denied your request for funding.

- The active voice sentence pattern propels the readers forward through your writing thus avoiding weak prose.

When To Use Passive Voice

In general, the passive voice is less direct, less forceful, and less concise than the active voice.

Use the passive voice in the following situations:

- Use passive voice when you do not know or do not want to reveal the performer of an action.
- Use passive voice when you want to emphasize the receiver of an action.

Examples:

Awkward passive: My bicycle was repainted by John.

Deliberate Passive: My bicycle was repainted. (*The performer is not mentioned and the emphasis is on the bicycle.*)

**Form of passive Voice Verbs**

The passive voice requires a “double verb” and will always consist of a form of the verb “**to be**” and the past participle (usually the “**en/ed/t**” form) of another verb.

Example:

Active: John baked the bread.

Passive: The bread **was baked** by John. (**was** is a form of the verb “be”.)

Writers should be familiar with the forms of “to be”, often called linking verbs, so that they can easily identify the passive voice in their work.

Review the forms of “to be”:

- *am, is, are, were, be, being, been.*

Often passive voice sentences will contain a “**by**” phrase indicating who or what performed the action.

- Passive sentences can be easily transformed into active sentences when the object of the preposition “**by**” is moved to the subject position in the sentence.

#### FORM OF PASSIVE VOICE VERBS

Examples:

Passive: The cookies were eaten by the children.

Active: The children ate the cookies.

Passive: The tunnels are dug by the gophers.

Active: The gophers dug the tunnels.

### Let's Practice.

Directions: Change the sentences below to the **active voice**.

1. The statue is being visited by hundreds of tourists every year.
2. My books were stolen by someone yesterday.
3. These books had been left in the classroom by a careless student.
4. Coffee is raised in many parts of Hawaii by plantation workers.
5. The house had been broken into by someone while the owners were on vacation.

Directions: Change the sentences below to the **passive voice**.

1. Children cannot open these bottles easily.
2. The government built a road right outside her front door.
3. Mr. Ross broke the antique vase as he walked through through the store.
4. When she arrived, the changes amazed her.
5. The construction workers are making street repairs all month long.

