

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

ACTIVE VOICE

When the subject in the sentence is doing the work.

- Subject – verb – object
- The girl opened the door.
- **The girl** = subject/doer
- **opened** = verb/action
- **the door** = object/receiver
- How do we know this sentence is active voice?
- Look for the verb/ ask who or what to find the subject of the sentence.

More examples:

- **The teacher marked the tests.**
- The teacher = doer
- marked = action
- the tests = receiver
- **The dog chased the cat.**
- The dog = doer
- chased = action
- the cat = receiver
- **The learners completed the task.**
- The learners = doer
- completed = action
- the task = receiver

Key rule

ACTIVE = The subject does the action.

PASSIVE VOICE

When the subject of the sentence is not doing the work in the sentence.

Compare:

Active:

The chef cooked the meal.

Passive:

The meal was cooked by the chef.

In the active sentence, we begin with **the chef** because the chef is doing the action.

In the passive sentence, we begin with **the meal** because the meal receives the action.

The focus has changed.

Why do we need the passive voice?

The police caught a thief last night.

A thief was caught by the police last night.

To change the FOCUS in the sentence.

EMPHASIS.

Active	Passive
The chef cooked the meal.	The meal was cooked by the chef.
The boy kicked the ball.	The ball was kicked by the boy.
The teacher marked the tests.	The tests were marked by the teacher.

Key rule

ACTIVE: Focus on the DOER.

PASSIVE: Focus on the RECEIVER.

How to change an active voice sentence into a passive voice sentence

BASIC RULES OF ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE:

- Find the VERB in the sentence and find out what tense it is in.
- Find the SUBJECT and OBJECT OF the sentences.
- Change the SUBJECT and OBJECT of the sentence.
- The VERB: the tense stays the same only the FORM of the verb changes.
- TENSE shown by helping verbs. Main verb = Past participle.

Time to practise

The girl plays the piano.

Verb - PLAYS

Tense - Present indefinite tense.

Who plays? The girl = subject

The girl plays what? the piano = object.

Subject and object change places, and the form of the verb must change.

The piano is played by the girl.

How does the verb form change?

Each **TENSE** has its own passive voice form. **THESE FORMS MUST BE LEARNED.**

TENSE	ACTIVE VOICE	PASSIVE VOICE
Present Indefinite	kick/sing	Am, is , are + past participle (kicked/sung)
Past Indefinite	kicked/sang	Was, were + past participle (kicked/sung)
Future Indefinite	will kick/shall sing	Shall, will + be+ past participle

Change in the form of the verb

TENSE	ACTIVE VOICE	PASSIVE VOICE
Present Continuous Tense	Am, is, are singing	Am, is, are + BEING + Past Perfect (sung)
Past Continuous Tense	Was, were singing	Was, were signing + BEING + Past Perfect (sung)
Present Perfect Tense	Has, have done	Has, have +BEEN + Past Perfect (done)
Past Perfect Tense	Had done	Had + BEEN + Past Perfect (done)
Future Perfect Tense	Shall, will have done	Shall, will have+Been + Past Perfect (done)

Keep the tense!

When changing voice, DO NOT change the tense.

Present tense

Active:

The teacher **marks** the tests.

Passive:

The tests **are marked** by the teacher.

Past tense

Active:

The teacher **marked** the tests.

Passive:

The tests **were marked** by the teacher.

Future tense

Active:

The teacher **will mark** the tests.

Passive:

The tests **will be marked** by the teacher.

Passive → Active

Passive:

The cake was baked by Sarah.

Who performed the action?

Sarah.

What was the action?

baked.

What received the action?

The cake.

Change it back:

Sarah baked the cake.

The windows were cleaned by the workers.

Answer:

The workers cleaned the windows.

The project will be completed by the learners.

Answer:

The learners will complete the project.

SOME BASIC RULES

- The TENSE of the verb always STAYS THE SAME, it is only the FORM of the verb that changes.
- The SUBJECT and the OBJECT change places in the passive voice.
- The MAIN VERB changes to the PAST PARTICIPLE, e.g. (done, gone)
- The AUXILIARY (HELPING) VERBS show the TENSE, e.g. (is, was, are, had)
- Each tense has a FIXED passive voice form.
- You must just be able to IDENTIFY the tense of the active voice sentence and STUDY the passive voice forms.

QUESTION 1: REWRITE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES IN THE PASSIVE VOICE.

- 1.1 They extract gold from South African mines every year.
- 1.2 The police caught the robber last night.
- 1.3 He will take me down the mine next week.
- 1.4 He is filling in the application form.
- 1.5 They have tarred the street long ago.
- 1.6 Someone stole the diamonds last night.
- 1.7 You can buy these radios cheaper somewhere else.
- 1.8 The girl will have finished the task by tomorrow.
- 1.9 They were refining the gold at the mine.
- 1.10 Who won the Comrades? (clue- start with: By whom)

QUESTION 2: Change the following sentence into the active voice now.

- 2.1 An apple was given to me by John.
- 2.2 Lunch is paid for by Jenny every day.
- 2.3 These plugs have been changed by Jim long ago.
- 2.4 The results of the examination will be known early next week.

MARKING GUIDELINES

Question 1:

- 1.1 Gold is extracted from South African mines by them.
- 1.2 The robber was caught last night.
- 1.3 I will be taken down the mine by him next week.
- 1.4 The application form is being filled in by him.
- 1.5 The street has been tarred long ago.
- 1.6 The diamonds were stolen by someone last night.
- 1.7 These radios can be bought cheaper somewhere else.
- 1.8 The task will have been finished by the girl by tomorrow.
- 1.9 The gold was being refined at the mine by them.
- 1.10 By whom was the Comrades won?

Question 2:

- 2.1 John gave me an apple.
- 2.2 Jenny pays for lunch every day.
- 2.3 Jim has changed these plugs long ago.
- 2.4 Students will know the results of the examination early next week.