

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE



ACTIVE OR PASSIVE VOICE

- Active Voice: In a normal, active sentence, the **doer of the action** is also the **subject**; any **receiver of the action** takes the **object** position in the sentence. E.g.:

Marie	ate	the cookie.
SUBJECT	VERB	OBJECT

- Passive Voice: Position of the subject and object are reversed. The object from the active sentence becomes the subject in the passive version. E.g.:

The cookie	was eaten	by Marie.
The cookie	was eaten.	--
SUBJECT	VERB	OBJECT

- The active and passive versions have the same basic meaning even though the subject and object have been switched. **The receiver of the action is now in the subject position**, *but it is still the receiver of the action.*



Unit 10.2: Active and Passive Voice

Voice refers to whether or not the subject is actually performing the action described by the verb. There are two types of voice:

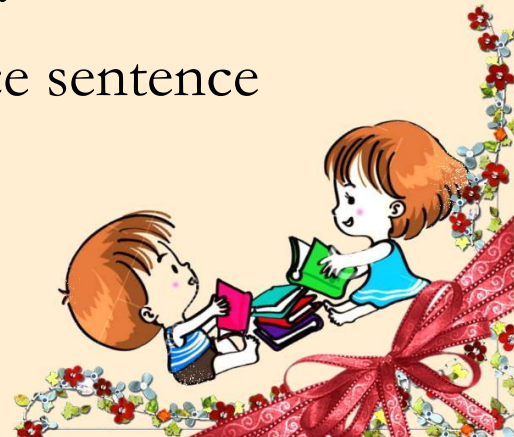
- 1) **ACTIVE VOICE:** the subject is performing the action described by the verb
- 2) **PASSIVE VOICE:** the subject is NOT performing the action but is, instead, being acted upon.

EXAMPLES:

ACTIVE: **Mr. Ali** constructed the new buffet **table**.

PASSIVE: The new buffet **table** was constructed by **Mr. Ali**.

***Notice how the **Direct Object** in the active voice sentence becomes the **subject** in the passive voice sentence.



FORMING THE PASSIVE

- The passive is formed with the “**be**” verb and a **past participle** and can be in **any tense**.
- **Intransitive verbs** (verbs that are not followed by an object e.g.: happen, sleep, some, seem) **CANNOT** be formed in the passive.
 - He was sleeping. (cannot be passive)



STRUCTURE OF PASSIVE VOICE VERBS

Grammatical Structure

Active

Passive

• e.g. eats

is eaten

• i.e. verb

be+*past participle

*(*past participle of eat = eaten)*



Unit 10.2: Active and Passive Voice

VERB FORM IN THE PASSIVE

Active

- Simple present:
 - Marie **eats** cookies.
- Present Progressive:
 - Marie **is eating** the cookie.
- Present Perfect:
 - Marie **has eaten** the cookie.
- Simple Past:
 - Marie **ate** the cookie.
- Past Progressive:
 - Marie **was eating** the cookie.

Passive

- Simple Present:
 - Cookies **are eaten** by Marie.
- Present Progressive:
 - The cookie **is being eaten** by Marie.
- Present Perfect:
 - The cookie **has been eaten** by Marie.
- Simple Past:
 - The cookie **was eaten** by Marie.
- Past Progressive:
 - The cookie **was being eaten** by Marie.

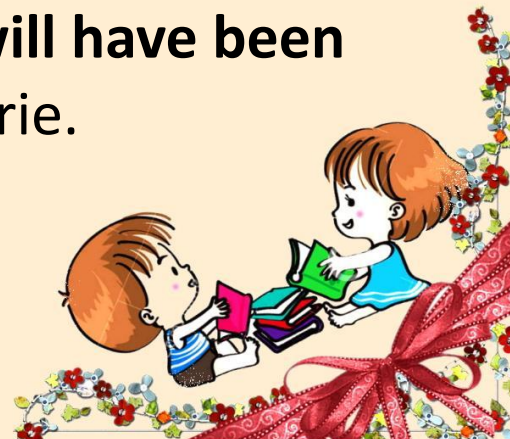


Active

- Past Perfect:
 - Marie **had eaten** the cookie.
- Simple Future:
 - Mary **will eat** the cookie.
- Be going to:
 - Marie **is going to eat** the cookie.
- Future Perfect:
 - Marie **will have eaten** the cookie.

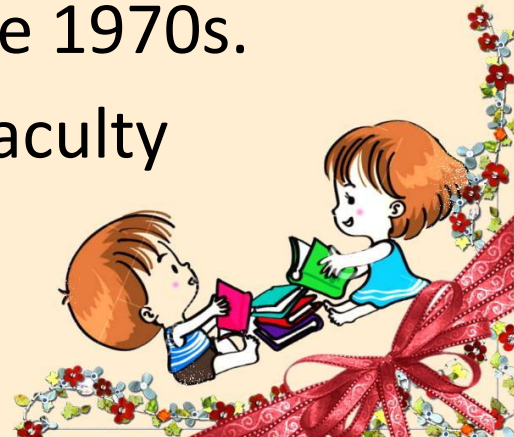
Passive

- Past Perfect:
 - The cookie **had been eaten** by Marie.
- Simple Future:
 - The cookie **will be eaten** by Marie.
- Be going to:
 - The cookie **is going to be eaten** by Marie.
- Future Perfect:
 - The cookie **will have been eaten** by Marie.



PASSIVE WITH MODALS

- When using modals the passive is formed in the present using a modal + be + past participle.
 - The window **can't be opened**.
 - Children **should be taught** to read in school.
- Passives with modals in the past are formed with a modal + have been + past participle.
 - The report **should have been done** last week.
 - That building **must have been built** in the 1970s.
 - Jack **ought to have been invited** to the faculty meeting.



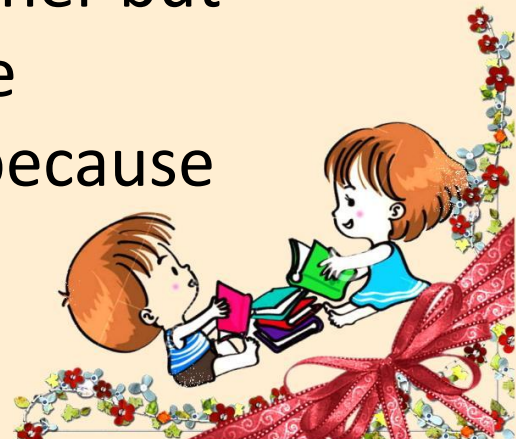
USING THE PASSIVE

- The passive is often used without any reference to the doer of the action. In this form, it is not important to know who performs the action OR the speaker does not know who performs the action.
 - Corn is **grown** in Mexico. (We know that farmers grow corn so it is not necessary to use the “by phrase”)
 - My house **was built** in 1901. (I don't know who built my house so I do not use the “by phrase”)



Unit 10.2: Active and Passive Voice

- The “by phrase” is used when it is important to know who performs the action.
 - “Great Expectations” was written by Charles Dickens. (It is important to know who wrote the book)
- When the speaker knows who performs the action but wants to call attention to the particular items, the passive is used.
 - *This* sweater was made by my grandmother but *that* sweater was made by my aunt. (The emphasis is on each particular sweater because they were made by different people.)



Unit 10.2: Active and Passive Voice

- The passive is often used **when describing a process** where the **same person performs the action** in every step.
 - The meat was marinated. (by the chef)
 - It was cooked for 40 minutes. (by the chef)
 - It was cut into thin strips. (by the chef)
- The passive is often use, in some cases, where the passive voice is **more appropriate to the content**.
 - If you are intentionally **trying to hide** your subject:
“The crime was committed by an unknown assailant.”
 - If you are intentionally **trying to focus** on the receiver of the action:
“Many victims were hurt by the drunk driver.”



Unit 10.2: Active and Passive Voice

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Examples Using the Passive Voice:

1. People **speak** English in many countries

Compare: English **is spoken** in many countries.

2. Somebody/They **pulled** down the building last week.

Compare: The old building **was pulled** down (by then/somebody)last week.

3. We **will hold** a meeting tomorrow.

Compare: A meeting **will be held** tomorrow (by us).

* () means optional.

Some More Examples:

1. Active : They believe me.

Passive : I am believed by them.

2. Active : He is praising me.

Passive : I am being praised by him.



Unit 10.2: Active and Passive Voice

Interrogative Passive Sentences, examples:

- a) Active : Who taught you grammar ?
 Passive : By whom was grammar taught to you?
- b) Active : Who stole the chair ?
 Passive : By whom was the chair stolen ?
- c) Active : Who can help me ?
 Passive : By whom can I be helped ?

Imperative Passive Sentences, examples:

- a) Active : Please help the needy.
 Passive : You are requested to help the needy.
- b) Active : Please examine this question.
 Passive : You are requested to examine this question.
- c) Active : Obey the rules of the road.
 Passive : You are advised to obey the rules of the road.
- d) Active : Tell him to leave the room at once.
 Passive : You are advised to leave the room at once.



Unit 10.2 : Active and Passive Voice

Active to Passive Voice : Some Special Cases

Rule 1

Active : They say that famine has spread everywhere.

Passive : It is said that famine has spread everywhere.

Rule 2

a) Active : Give me a book. Passive : Let a book be given to me.

b) Active : Post this letter. Passive : Let this letter be posted.

c) Active : Open the door. Passive : Let the door be opened. Or The door should be opened.

Rule 3

a) Active : Do not abuse others. Passive : Let others not be abused.

b) Active : Do not insult the beggar. Passive : Let the beggar not be insulted.

Rule 4

Active : The rich should not hate the poor. Passive : The poor should not be hatred by the rich.

Active : She is to help me. Passive : I am to be helped by her.

Active : We have to find her. Passive : She has to be found by us.

Active : I can help her. Passive : She can be helped by me.

Rule 5

Active : They say that famine has spread everywhere.

Passive : It is said that famine has spread everywhere.



Unit 10.2: Active and Passive Voice

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

The following sentences are written in the passive voice.

Rewrite each of the sentences to make them active.

1. It was determined by the committee that the report was flawed.
2. We were invited by the neighbors to attend a party.
3. Unfortunately, the cell phone could not be repaired by the technician.
4. A letter is being written by the school to the parents regarding the incident at last night's dance.
5. The entrance exam was failed by over half of the applicants to the university.



Unit 10.2: Active and Passive Voice

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

The following sentences shift between the active and passive voice. Correct the sentence so that it is written completely in the active voice.

1. John thought this teacher might be crazy, which obviously was not appreciated by her!
2. For the opening ceremonies of the assembly, a dance was choreographed by a student to a rap song.
3. Teachers have marked all of their exams, and results will be organized in the student files.
4. Pep rallies, lunch activities, and fundraisers were discussed by the student government.
5. Whenever an error was found by the teacher, the entire essay had to be rewritten by the student.

Underline the verb and circle the subject in the following sentences. Determine if the sentence is active or passive.

Sentence	Active?	Passive?
1. John and Samantha play football after school every afternoon.		
2. Richard was driven to school by his mother this morning.		
3. The shoplifter was tackled by the shopkeeper.		
4. The actors performed Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.		

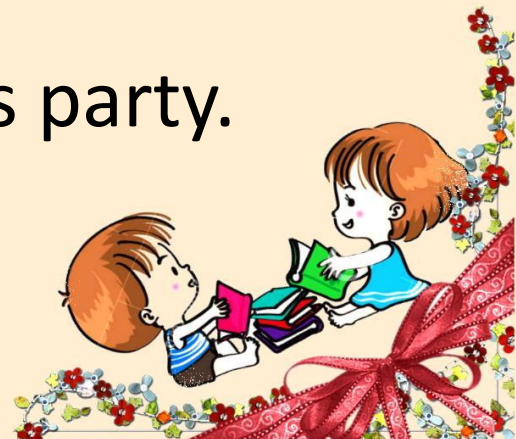


Unit 10.2: Active and Passive Voice

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

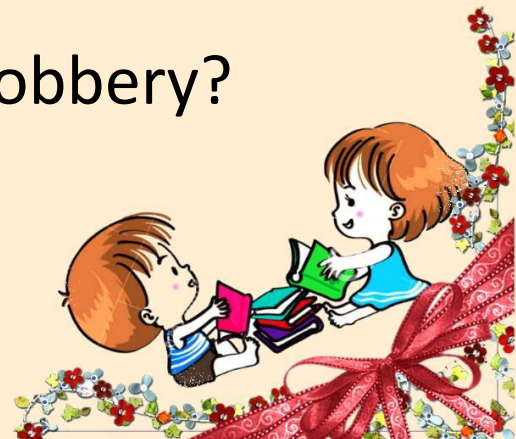
Find out if the following sentences are in the active or passive voice.

1. I washed my car three weeks ago.
2. The dishes were washed and put away.
3. John's hair was cut short.
4. Joe always helps his classmates.
5. The shirts will be ironed.
6. Milk is collected every day.
7. Mum cooks meals for us.
8. Tom will invite his good friends to his party.
9. Lily was bored by the movie.



Rewrite the following sentences using the passive voice.

1. He opens the door.
2. We set the table.
3. She pays a lot of money.
4. I draw a picture when I am alone.
5. They wear blue shoes.
6. They don't help you.
7. He doesn't open the book.
8. You do not write the letter.
9. Does your mum pick you up everyday?
10. Did the police catch the thief during the robbery?



End of Session

