



‘Voice’ – What Is It?

The Two Voices in the English Language

There are two voices in the English language and they are as follows:

- Active Voice
- Passive Voice

Let us look into the two voices a little in detail with the help of the meaning and definition given below.

What is the Active Voice? – Meaning and Definition

The active voice, in a sentence, denotes that the **noun** or **pronoun** that acts as the subject in the sentence is the doer of the action. In other words, the subject performs the action or acts upon the verb.

According to the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, the active voice is defined as “the form of a verb in which the subject is the person or thing that performs the action”, and according to the Collins Dictionary, the active voice is defined as “a voice of verbs used to indicate that the subject of a sentence is performing the action or causing the event or process described by the verb.”

What is the Passive Voice? – Meaning and Definition

The passive voice, on the other hand, represents that the subject is one acted upon by the action or verb in the sentence. It can also be said that the passive voice indicates that the subject in the sentence is no longer active but passive.

According to the Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, the passive voice is defined as “the form of a verb used when the subject is affected by the action of the verb”, and according to the Collins Dictionary, the passive voice is “formed using ‘be’ and the past **participle** of a verb. The subject of a passive clause does not perform the action expressed by the verb but is affected by it.”

Using the Active Voice and the Passive Voice – Points to Remember

There are a few points that you have to bear in mind when using the active voice and the passive voice. In the English language, the active voice is used generally as they give the information in a direct and clear manner. Make sure you do not use the passive voice just because you think it sounds better. Use it only if it is necessary. Remember that the active voice has the subject doing the action and the passive voice has the subject receiving the action. If you want to communicate your thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively, especially in a professional setup, it would be best to use the active voice.

A pro tip for you to master the active voice and the passive voice is to know the structure and formula by which they work.

Active Voice – Subject + Verb + Object

Passive Voice – Object + Verb + Subject

Difference between the Active Voice and the Passive Voice

Analysing the difference between the active voice and the passive voice is what will help you in a much better way to learn how to use the two voices effectively. Take a look at the following table to know how they differ.

| Active Voice | Passive Voice |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Denotes that the subject is performing the action.• The active voice does not require a linking verb to make sense.• The active voice focuses on the doer of the action.• Has a direct, clear and strong tone.• Examples:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I decorated the hall.• Devi gave Shanthi a gift. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Denotes that the subject is acted upon by the verb or action in the sentence.• The passive voice uses a linking verb followed by the past participle of the main verb.• The passive voice comes in handy when the doer of the action is undetermined.• Has an indirect, weak and subtle tone.• Examples:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The hall was decorated by me.• Shanthi was given a gift by Devi. |

Rules to be Followed When Converting the Active Voice to the Passive Voice

When converting the active voice into the passive voice or vice versa, there are changes in the tenses and pronouns used in the sentences.

The table given below shows you how the tenses change when converting the active voice to the passive voice and vice versa.

| Conversion Rules for Active Voice and Passive Voice | | | | | |
|---|---------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Tense | Voice | Simple Tense | Continuous Tense | Perfect Tense | Perfect Continuous Tense |
| Present | Active | Brendon plays cricket. | Brendon is playing cricket. | Brendon has played cricket. | Brendon has been playing cricket. |
| | Passive | Cricket is played by Brendon. | Cricket is being played by Brendon. | Cricket has been played by Brendon. | No Passive |
| Past | Active | Brendon played cricket. | Brendon was playing cricket. | Brendon had played cricket. | Brendon had been playing cricket. |
| | Passive | Cricket was played by Brendon. | Cricket was being played by Brendon. | Cricket had been played by Brendon. | No Passive |
| Future | Active | Brendon will play cricket. | Brendon will be playing cricket. | Brendon will have played cricket. | Brendon will have been playing cricket. |
| | Passive | Cricket will be played by Brendon. | No Passive | Cricket will have been played by Brendon. | No Passive |

| Change of Pronouns | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Active Voice | Passive Voice |
| I | Me |
| We | Us |
| He | Him |
| She | Her |
| They | Them |
| It | It |

There are a few other points that you have to know so that you can use the two voices effectively. They are as follows:

- When converting a sentence in the active voice to the passive voice, the first thing that you have to do is interchange the subject and the object.
- The next part of speech you have to focus on is the verb. When converting the active voice into the passive voice, you just have to convert the **main verb** into its past participle or its third form. The third form of the main verb is the past participle form of the verb.
- When you are changing the **tense** of the main verb, make sure you use an **auxiliary verb** which maintains the tense the sentence represents.
- Always use the **preposition**, 'by' before the subject in a passive sentence.
- If there are any **adverbs** used in the sentence with the active voice, be sure to include it in the passive voice as well. Do not just drop it when you convert a sentence in the active voice to the passive voice or vice-versa.

Examples of the Active and Passive Voice

Given below are a few examples of how to convert the active voice into the passive voice.

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- **Active Voice** – Twinkle likes adventure stories.

Passive Voice – Adventure stories are liked by Twinkle.

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- **Active Voice** – Latha is learning French this year.

Passive Voice – French is being learnt by Latha this year.

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- **Active Voice** – Kurt has brought macaroons.

Passive Voice – Macaroons have been brought by Kurt.

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- **Active Voice** – Sidharth played cricket.

Passive Voice – Cricket was played by Sidharth.

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- **Active Voice** – They were making invitation cards.

Passive Voice – Invitation cards were being made by them.

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- **Active Voice** – Becky had packed the bags.

Passive Voice – The bags had been packed by Becky.

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- **Active Voice** – Mira will buy the refreshments for the party.

Passive Voice – The refreshments for the party will be bought by Mira.

- **Active Voice** – Sanjay will have given the forms to all the participants.

Passive Voice – The forms will have been given to all the participants by Sanjay.

Check Your Understanding of the Active Voice and the Passive Voice

Now that you have seen a number of examples and learnt how the conversion is done, try converting the following sentences as directed.

1. Varun is helping Reshmi. (Change into passive voice)
2. A gift was given to Manassa by me. (Change into active voice)
3. Santana will sing *All My Life* at the Nationals. (Change into active voice)
4. A mouse was being chased by my cat. (Change into active voice)
5. Naveen loves Praveena. (Change into passive voice)
6. The decorations for the annual day will be done by Emma. (Change into active voice)
7. J. K. Rowling wrote the Harry Potter novels. (Change into passive voice)
8. Ms. Holly will teach Spanish this year. (Change into passive voice)
9. Mike was hit by Nick. (Change into active voice)
10. Naslen is being scolded by his mom. (Change into active voice)

Check out if you did the conversion right from the answers given below.

1. Reshmi ***is being helped by*** Varun.
2. I ***gave*** Manassa a gift.
3. *All My Life* ***will be sung by*** Santana at the Nationals.
4. My cat ***was chasing*** a mouse.
5. Praveena ***is loved by*** Naveen.
6. Emma ***will do*** the decorations for the annual day.
7. The Harry Potter novels ***were written by*** J. K. Rowling.
8. Spanish ***will be taught by*** Ms. Holly this year.
9. Nick ***hit*** Mike.
10. Naslen's mom ***is scolding*** him.

Active and Passive Voice Exercise with Answers

It is important that students have a complete understanding of the [tenses in English](#) before they start working out exercises on active and passive voice. This is only because it would make it easier for students to comprehend it.

Identify the Voice

Go through the sentences given below and identify the voice used.

1. Shreya Ghoshal sings beautiful songs.
2. The Sun sets in the West.
3. The boy was being beaten by his teacher.
4. Bucky is helped by Steve.
5. The carpenter is building the desk.
6. The woodcutter cut down the tree.
7. The man dropped his axe into the river.
8. The bird was shot by the naughty boy.
9. The bag was found by me.
10. Natasha lost the money.
11. The farmer will plough the field.
12. The work will be finished by the workers in a day.
13. The enemy has entered the war zone.
14. Who sang the song?

15. The children teased the animals.

Answers

1. Active voice 2. Active voice 3. Passive voice 4. Passive Voice 5. Active voice 6. Active voice 7. Active voice 8. Passive voice 9. Passive voice 10. Active voice 11. Active voice 12. Passive voice 13. Active voice 14. Active voice 15. Active voice

Active Passive Exercise

Conversion of active voice into passive voice and vice-versa can help learners comprehend thoroughly and also check how far they have understood the usage of active and passive voice. Here is an active voice to passive voice conversion exercise for you.

Change Active Voice into Passive Voice Exercises with Answers

Change the following sentences from active voice to passive voice.

1. The dog chased the cat.
2. The dog bit the boy.
3. The peon rang the bell.
4. Ram played hockey.
5. Miss Mary teaches us English.
6. Raj caught the ball.
7. Children like sweets.
8. Rita will take a photograph.
9. Who taught you this poem?
10. The police arrested the smuggler.
11. Shiva was flying a kite.
12. The hunter shot the deer.
13. The lion attacked the zebra.
14. Virat threw the ball.
15. Everyone loves Zara.
16. My sister has drawn this portrait.
17. The people were helping the wounded woman.
18. Sam had taken the medicines.
19. The player is taking extra time.
20. The cat ate the fish.

Answers –

1. The cat was chased by the dog.
2. The boy was bitten by the dog.

3. The bell was rung by the peon.
4. Hockey was played by Ram.
5. English is taught to us by Miss Mary.
6. The ball was caught by Raj.
7. Sweets are liked by children.
8. A photograph will be taken by Rita.
9. By whom were you taught this poem?
10. The smuggler was arrested by the police.
11. A kite was being flown by Shiva.
12. The deer was shot by the hunter.
13. The zebra was attacked by the lion.
14. The ball was thrown by Virat.
15. Zara is loved by everyone.
16. This portrait has been drawn by my sister.
17. The wounded woman was being helped by the people.
18. The medicines had been taken by Sam.
19. Extra time is being taken by the player.
20. The fish was eaten by the cat.